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by M. HEERMA VAN VOSS, H. G. KIPPENBERG and R. J. Z. WERBLOWSKY

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## EDITORS' PAGE

When the late Prof. C.J. Bleeker resigned from the onerous task of Editor-in-Chief of IAHR publications, a task which he had fulfilled single-handedly from 1959-1977 (see NUMEN xxiv, 1977, pp. 161-2), an editorial troika took over from him (see also NUMEN xxv, 1978, p. 1). In 1985 Prof. Eric Sharpe withdrew from the editorial team because, from his vantage-point at the University of Sydney in Australia, he felt that distance and frequent postal delays rendered efficient editorial collaboration almost impossible. At the request of the two remaining Editors, the Executive Board of the IAHR has now co-opted Prof. H. Kippenberg of the University of Groningen (known to many, among other things, also as one of the editors of the *Iconography of Religions* series and of its companion annual *Visible Religion*) to the editorial team. NUMEN is thus edited again by a troika.

Readers will have noticed that some of the new features introduced in 1978 have fallen by the wayside in recent years. The reason may seem as enigmatic to some readers as it is obvious to those who are members of the IAHR. NUMEN is in some respects a scholarly journal like any other. But it is also the official journal of the IAHR. One of the first happy initiatives of the new Secretary-General of the IAHR, after taking office in August 1985, was to begin publishing a Bulletin which is circulated among all member groups and which contains, among other news of interest to members, also the material and information that went into NUMEN's "Chronicle" and "Calendar of Events" sections. These latter therefore became redundant. The abolition of these sections was thus more than an editorial whim: it was a result of the close relationship of NUMEN with its parent, the International Association for the History of Religions.

## ROMAN MITHRAISM AND CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

LUTHER H. MARTIN

Unlike early Christian sites, which were recorded as the foci of cult activity and which often perdured as the loci for later architectural exploitation, the locations of Mithraic sites went unrecorded and have been discovered quite by chance as a result of modern restorations or excavations directed towards other ends. In addition to earlier known sites concentrated in the Rhine and Danube regions, twentieth century discoveries have produced a steady flow of new Mithraic finds in Italy, especially in Ostia and Rome.<sup>2</sup> When Franz Cumont, the father of modern Mithraic studies, published his charter work in 1898,<sup>3</sup> only three mithraea were known in Ostia; now at least 15 have been identified. And in Rome, discoveries have continued apace with the uncovering of such major mithraea as those in the Baths of Caracalla and the Circus Maximus, the Barbarini and the S. Prisca Mithraea, and most recently, in the *castra Peregrinorum*, discovered during the renovations of S. Stefano Rotondo.<sup>4</sup> The flood of new Mithraic discoveries in the capital of the Roman world allowed Cumont to conclude by 1945 that Rome was the capital of Mithraism, and almost the seat of its papacy.<sup>5</sup> The density of Mithraic finds in and around the city emphasizes its importance for any understanding of the relationship of Mithraism to Christianity.

### I

As with so much else, the traditional understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Mithraism has been based upon the polemical judgements of the church fathers.<sup>6</sup> Since Justin's accusation in the mid-second century that Roman Mithraists were diabolically imitating the Christians, the two religions have been considered rivals for the religious allegiance of the West.<sup>7</sup> In 1882, Ernst Renan summarized this view for modernity in his widely cited judgement that "If the growth of Christianity had been

arrested by some mortal malady, the world would have been Mithraic.”<sup>8</sup> Several years later Cumont concurred, writing of the “ferocious and implacable duel” between Mithraism and Christianity for “the domination of the world.”<sup>9</sup> Although M.J. Vermaseren, the greatest modern interpreter of Mithraism, found this opinion to be “too sweeping,”<sup>10</sup> he nevertheless perpetuated the conventional view of Christianity and Mithraism as “deadly rivals.”<sup>11</sup>

Father Leonard Boyle, who resides above a famous mithraeum in Rome, at S. Clemente, has written that “too much... has been made of the ‘threat’ of Mithraism to Christianity.” He based his judgement on the evidence of “only fifty known mithraea for a Rome of about one million inhabitants in the third century.”<sup>12</sup> But Filippo Coarelli has estimated that as many as 2000 mithraea might have existed in Rome, a figure he arrives at by analogy to Mithraic finds in Ostia in proportion to its population and by assuming that the population of Ostia was 1/50 that of Rome.<sup>13</sup> However, population estimates for Rome range from 538,000 to 1,250,000 in the mid-second century when its population was greatest, and from 250,000 to 800,000 at the time of Constantine.<sup>14</sup>

If the population of Rome—for which more information is available than any other city in the Empire—is so uncertain, population estimates for Ostia, which range from 20,000 to 58,000, are even more so.<sup>15</sup> Such differences in estimates depend upon such variables as the calculation of the slave population, the size of households, the numbers of persons in each house, life expectancy and various uses of modern population figures as a basis for calculating those of antiquity,<sup>16</sup> and demonstrates that it is simply not possible to arrive at any such calculations with even approximate exactness.<sup>17</sup>

More conservative than his estimate of Roman mithraea based upon population estimates, is Coarelli’s estimate, based upon topographical distribution, that just under 700 mithraea should exist in Rome. This estimate is based upon the 33 hectares of Ostia that have been systematically excavated out of a total of 70, or approximately one half of the ancient town. Since the 15 Ostian mithraea are evenly distributed throughout the town, two per hectare, Coarelli estimates that a comparable distribution throughout



the 1,373 hectares within the Aurelian walls of Rome would result in 680-690 mithraea.<sup>18</sup>

Even more problematic than urban population estimates for antiquity, are estimates for sub-groups of population. Nevertheless, based upon Coarelli's more conservative estimate for the number of Roman mithraea, and assuming that these mithraea supported an average membership of 60, or ten to twenty more per mithraeum than is estimated for the typically smaller shrines,<sup>19</sup> the population of Roman Mithraists would have been approximately 41,000, or more.<sup>20</sup>

By contrast, only 25 Christian *tituli* are known in Rome by the fourth century, while the first Christian *basilicae* were pointedly built outside the walls of the city.<sup>21</sup> Cornelius, bishop of Rome in the mid-third century (251-253), provides the only statistic for estimating the number of Roman Christians. In a letter which is cited by Eusebius (6.43.11), he reports that there are 154 Christian officials in Rome: 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 sub-deacons, 42 acolytes, and 52 exorcists, readers and door-keepers; and more than "1500 widows and persons in distress." From these figures, Gibbon estimates the number of Christians in Rome at 50,000,<sup>22</sup> while Krautheimer speculates that the number at the time of Constantine may have approached 267,000.<sup>23</sup> But even Gibbon's lower estimate has been judged too high.<sup>24</sup> Such figures suggest only that the scale of the Roman Mithraic population was roughly comparable to that of Christianity; they suggest nothing, however, of any relationship which might have existed between the two groups based on relative size.

No visitor to Rome can ignore, however, the topographical observation that Mithraic sanctuaries, to the virtual exclusion of other cult sites, have been regularly discovered in proximity to historic Christian churches. The mithraea discovered in the excavations beneath S. Clemente and S. Prisca are well known, and the most recent discovery, beneath S. Stefano Rotundo, has recently been published.<sup>25</sup> The Circus Maximus Mithraeum is actually located just behind the northwest end of the apse of S. Maria in Cosmedin, while that of Via Giovanni Lanza is similarly located just beyond the northwest end of the apse of S. Martino ai Monti. But what of those Roman mithrae which are in no proximity to any

Christian site: the Mithraea of Caracalla or Barbarini, or all of those outside of the Aurelian walls such as the Mithraeum of Marino and the numerous examples at Ostia?

John Schreiber has shown that second century mithraea in Ostia were located solely in privately owned buildings while those of the third century were located in public areas.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Coarelli has shown that Roman mithraea are located in or near such public or quasi-public spaces as barracks, baths, circuses, or offices of corporations,<sup>27</sup> suggesting an official or quasi-official status for Mithraism by the third century. This increasingly public nature of third century Italian Mithraism suggests no other significant interaction between it and Christianity than a competition for available real estate in the crowded, public areas of urban Rome by two recently introduced and rapidly expanding "eastern" cults.<sup>28</sup>

Those who view Mithraism and Christianity as fierce rivals have made much of a militant destruction of Mithraism by Christians at the end of the fourth century. In the Mithraeum of S. Prisca, for example, the eyes of the figures in the frescoes have apparently been gouged out, the relief broken up, and the ruins filled with rubbish, presumably by the Christians of S. Prisca.<sup>29</sup> To argue from such evidence that Christianity was systematically anti-Mithraic, however, is akin to arguing that the Mithraic appropriation of an Etruscan tomb for its sanctuary at Sutri (later converted into the Church of S. Maria del Parto) demonstrates that Mithraism was anti-Etruscan.

The excavations under S. Clemente, however, perhaps better indicate the fate of Roman Mithraism. Following the fire of Nero in 64 A.D., the remains of houses in the valley between the Coelian and Oppian hills had been covered over and became the foundation for two buildings: a brick *insula*, the courtyard of which was converted to a mithraeum during the second century; and a larger building across the narrow street, probably belonging to a man named Clement, later confused with Pope Clement. At the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, Christians began meeting in a room of this larger house, and sometimes between 313 and 384, the entire house was converted into a church. For this renovation, the ground floor was filled in and the area which was formerly the courtyard became the nave of the new church, while

the first floor rooms were remodeled into the north and south aisles. Sometime after 395, the clergy of S. Clemente acquired the property across the street which was still at the original ground level. The mithraeum in this building presumably had been abandoned by this time. As they had with their original building, the Christians filled in their new acquisition to the level of their church to provide a foundation for an apse, which was added to the rectangular church. In the 12th century, this structure in turn was covered over to provide a foundation for the present structure.<sup>30</sup> Rather than intense rivalry resulting in destruction, the rapidly expanding Christian church in fourth century Rome seems simply to have capitalized upon the misfortunes of their pagan neighbors in order to maximize their real estate holdings.

## II

The relation of Christianity to Mithraism, and to the other cults of Rome, can be charted more clearly by the events of the fourth century which culminated in the so-called "pagan revival."<sup>31</sup> In 382, the emperor Gratian officially broke with the policies of religious toleration which had been adopted by his predecessors, Jovian (363-4) and Valentinian (364-75). He withdrew funds for the maintenance of the public cults and removed the Altar of Victory from the senate where it had been dedicated in 29 B.C by Augustus. In August 383, Gratian was overthrown by Maximus who set up an independent court in Trier, and Valentinian II succeeded his brother in Italy (383-92) under the protection of the German, Arbogast. With the death of Gratian, the aristocratic defenders of paganism in Rome sought to consolidate their positions.

The most articulate and powerful spokesmen for paganism during this period were: Q. Aurelius Symmachus, *praefectus urbis* in 384 and a relative of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (374-397), and Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, *praefectus praetorio Italiae*. Symmachus is usually portrayed as a conservative who championed the traditional Roman cults, while Praetextatus is presented as a champion of the ideals of Julian, the Apostate so-called, who championed a solar theology in support of imperial rule, and was an initiate in the

Mysteries of Eleusis and probably in those of Mithras as well.<sup>32</sup> When Praetextatus died in 384, Symmachus, in grief, resigned as prefect and his cousin, Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, assumed leadership of the pagan party. Following the suspicious death of Valentinian II in May 392 and Arbogast's support of Flavius Eugenius as emperor, Flavianus became *praefectus urbis* in 393. He committed suicide in 394 following the defeat of Eugenius by Theodosius and of all hope for the pagan cause.

At the beginning of the fifth century, Macrobius wrote of Praetextatus in his *Saturnalia* that:

one of the guests began to praise his memory, another his learning, and all his knowledge of religion; for he alone, they declared, knows the secrets of the nature of the godhead, he alone had the intelligence to apprehend the divine and the ability to expound it (1.24,1).<sup>33</sup>

This passage closely replicates the observations of Praetextatus' wife, Paulina, preserved on Praetextatus' funeral monument, currently in the Capitoline Museum, on the virtues of her husband.<sup>34</sup>

In the *Saturnalia*, Macrobius presents an argument for solar theology which assumes an astrological rationale common to paganism generally but which he attributes to Praetextatus. Citing Cicero, he argues that the sun guides and directs the rest of the heavenly lights and presides over the planets in their courses. Just as the movements of the planets determine and thus foretell the sequence of human destinies, the sun, which directs the powers that guide our affairs, is the sovereign of all that goes on around us (*Sat.* 1.17,2).<sup>35</sup> The various activities of a single deity, therefore, are to be regarded as analagous to various divinities (*Sat.* 1.17,3). Similarly, Symmachus argued in his *Third Relatio* that: "all the different gods we worship should be thought of as one" (3,10).<sup>36</sup>

But paganism was not so homogeneous as Macrobius and Symmachus portrayed it.<sup>37</sup> According to his funeral monument, Praetextatus not only championed the traditional Roman cults, as did Symmachus: the cults of Sol, Hercules, and Liber Pater, celestial deities easily accommodated to the principles of solar theology, but the chthonic mysteries of Demeter and the cults of the so-called "oriental" deities as well: Hecate, Sarapis, the Magna Mater, and Mithras. As established by the archaeology and epigraphy of Ostia and Rome, the vast majority of pagans con-

formed to this example of Praetextatus in their dedication not only to the ancient Roman rites, but by their initiation and holding of sacred office in "oriental" cults as well.<sup>38</sup>

Official Roman piety could be articulated by any of these religious strategies. *Pietas* signifies right relationship to family, state, emperor or cosmos. Symmachus, for example, speaks of the traditional cults as maintaining the "custom of your parents" (3.2), the "rites of the fathers" (3.3, 8, 9), the "love of tradition" (3.4), and the "rites of the empire" (3. 7). The "oriental" cults, on the other hand, offered right relationship with the cosmos—however prior cosmic alienation might be understood. Recent research on Mithraism, for example, has decoded its central tauroctonous image, the portrayal of Mithras slaying a bull common to virtually every Mithraic find, as a cosmic image rather than the narrative event of transformed Persian myth assumed by Cumont's nineteenth century historicism. Its assemblage of conventional Greco-Roman imagery is organized, according to this research, by the relation of astral constellations universally familiar from Hellenistic star-maps.<sup>39</sup> Mithraism belongs to the wide-spread astral cults of late antiquity and witnesses to their popularity. It is this cosmic paradigm for terrestrial life which Mithraism shares with its pagan cousins.<sup>40</sup>

Mithraism combined the two cosmic dimensions of Roman paganism, at least formally: the celestial in its dedication to *Mithras Sol Invictus*, and the chthonic in its claims to be an "eastern" mystery. This alliance of officially recognized cosmic cults supported a parallel temporal rule of empire by supplying a universalistic ideological discourse in support of a cosmopolitan vision of empire modeled since Augustus upon Alexander's largely unrealized imperial vision. Already in 205/4 B.C. the Anatolian cult of Cybele had been brought to Rome by decree of the senate. Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, in pursuit of the Stoic ideal of nature, had established imperial precedent for initiation in the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter.<sup>41</sup> Reinhold Merkelbach has recently reemphasized that Mithraism was essentially a "religion of loyalty."<sup>42</sup> It provided "an economical aspect of social control" by its confirmation of the formal, authoritarian and ritualistic social experience of its primarily military and bureaucratic adherents.<sup>43</sup>

Although Mithraism “never acquired civic status of a place among the *sacra publica*,<sup>44</sup> it did fulfill “a traditional and highly conscious function of Roman religion for the important agents of Roman power.”<sup>45</sup>

When Constantine restored the economic stability of the empire at the expense of the pagan *populus*,<sup>46</sup> he was no longer able to employ their solar theology as an ideological basis for empire and emperor.<sup>47</sup> As represented in Eusebius’ famous account of Constantine’s vision of the Cross against the sun, the universal solar ideology of paganism became transformed into the universal theology of the Christians.<sup>48</sup>

As with paganism, fourth century Christianity should not be viewed simplistically as a unified force standing firm against the pagan alternative. The bishops of Christianity faced in their domain the same problem as did the emperors: that of defining a basis for and maintaining the unity of their respective responsibilities. As Robin Lane Fox has noted, “the prime obstacle to Christianization was the Christians themselves.”<sup>49</sup> A bewildering array of claimants competed for Christian authority: the Donatists in Africa, the followers of Melitius in Egypt, the Arians in the East, the Valentinians in Rome, the Pelagians and the Manichaeans.

The successes of Roman Christianity initiated a redistribution of power from a network in which cult was inseparable from the state to a bifurcation of power in which state and religion reinforced one another. The result was the first state religion,<sup>50</sup> a new ideological and institutional basis for Christian and thereby for Imperial unity. This new distribution of power was first signalled by Gratian’s refusal, at the urging of Ambrose, to accept the title of “*Pontifex Maximus*” in 379.<sup>51</sup> That refusal also signified that the worship of the old gods no longer effected the good of the state.<sup>52</sup> But this new bi-polar distribution of power raised a new question of authority as well.

Representing the traditional order, Symmachus had argued to Valentinus II that the Altar of Victory should be restored to its place in the Senate as it was the “instrument of swearing loyalty to the emperor and to his laws and decrees” (3, 5). It sealed the political authority of senatorial decisions as if acting under oath (3, 5). Walter Burkert has shown that religion, morality, and political

organization in antiquity had been indissolubly linked since the fourth century B.C. teachings of Lycurgus (d. 324 B.C.), who held that "the oath is what holds a democracy together." Subsequently, the oath and its prerequisite altar became the basis for state and international law, as well as for civil and criminal law.<sup>53</sup> In asserting a religious basis for political authority, Peter Brown has concluded that the senators of Rome attempted to maintain an "Italian front" against Maximus in Gaul and Theodosius in the East. "In failing, they revealed not so much the weakness of their religion, as of their political position."<sup>54</sup>

Ambrose capitalized upon this setback to paganism by consolidating Christian power through his dealings with Theodosius. The massacre at Thessalonica and the public penance demanded by Ambrose of Theodosius in 390 is well known. But the precedent for this submission of Emperor to Bishop was established already in 389 as a result of the burning of a synagogue at Callinicum by Christians in December 388. Theodosius ordered the Bishop of Callinicum, the instigator of the incident, to rebuild the synagogue at his own expense, to restore stolen properties, and to discipline those involved. Despite the justice of this decision, and despite a compromise offered by Theodosius to rebuild the synagogue at state expense, Ambrose demanded that no reparation whatever be made to the Jews, either by Christians or by the state, and that the rioters not be punished. Theodosius yielded and cancelled the order. As F. H. Dudden concludes:

This he did, not from weakness, nor on religious grounds, not because he was convinced by Ambrose's artificial pleadings, but from political necessity. Having only recently arrived in Italy, when his person was unknown and his authority not yet firmly established, he dared not take the risk of antagonizing [Ambrose] who had the power... of stirring up and setting in opposition to him the whole Catholic population."<sup>55</sup>

The subsequent public penance successfully demanded of Theodosius by Ambrose following the massacre at Thessalonica formalized the new relation of power between church and state. A clergy claimed the power to judge, condemn, punish and pardon a monarch; a monarch submitted to spiritual authority which he recognized and publicly acknowledged as higher than his own.<sup>56</sup> This

principle is already articulated in Ambrose's letter to Valentinian written in response to Symmachus' petition:

Just as all men under Roman rule serve you as emperor and lord of the world, so you, too, are a servant of the omnipotent God and his holy faith.<sup>57</sup>

The new consolidation of power in Christian hands at the conclusion of antiquity is exemplified by Ambrose's rhetorical question of Symmachus' petition: "If the old rites gave so much pleasure," then why did Rome turn to the rites of others: Venus, Cybele, or Mithras?<sup>58</sup> Ambrose replied to his own question by saying that everything since then has progressed for the better:

So we, too, in youth have the feelings of childhood; with the changing years we also change and lay aside the childish things of our unformed intellects. (XVIII. 28)

With this allusion to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (13:11), Ambrose championed a view of emperor and empire situated in a historical process. The traditional cosmic paradigm of celestial and chthonic piety became located by Christians in the same history and understood either as past prophecies of Christian presence,<sup>59</sup> or, more usually, as demonic survivals into a present.<sup>60</sup> Ambrose's point, again derived from Paul, is that the Christian is freed from such "elemental cosmic powers" (Gal. 4: 3, 8-11) for a historical future—a view which only received its fullest expression in Renaissance thought.

### III

The difference between Christianity and Mithraism seemed to be encompassed by Christianity's understanding of a historical order of things as an alternative to paganism's cosmic understanding generally, rather than by any specific 'rivalry' between the two. As Arthur Darby Nock concluded, with implicit reference to Renan's judgement:

Suppose that Christianity had perished early, whether as a result of a consistent persecution or by being swallowed up in the general religious and cultural atmosphere of the time: we should not then have had a Mithraic world. We might have had a world in which Mithraism itself was the special devotion of a few but in which it had been otherwise absorbed in a solar piety.<sup>61</sup>



Thus Boyle's revisionist judgement minimizing any direct threat to nascent Roman Christianity is supported, but for reasons of theological orientation rather than those of population or proximity. Following the progressive Christianization of the army and the imperial court after Constantine, the Mithraic "religion of loyalty" lost much of its *raison d'être*. By the time of Theodosius's prohibitions of paganism during the final decade of the fourth century, Mithraism was dead.

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<sup>1</sup> Research for this article was conducted in connection with a seminar on "Art in the Culture of Pagan and Christian Rome in Late Antiquity" sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities at the American Academy in Rome, Summer 1987.

<sup>2</sup> R.L. Gordon reports that 49% of votive inscriptions dedicated to Mithras between 150 and 300 A.D. are from the Rhine-Danube area while 31% are from Italy, 18% from Rome. "Mithraism and Roman Society", *Religion* 2 (1972), pp. 92-121: 103.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*. 2 vols. (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1896, 1898).

<sup>4</sup> See Roger Beck, "Mithraism since Franz Cumont," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II, 17. 4, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984, pp. 2002-2115; 2008-2013, 2026-33).

<sup>5</sup> Beck, p. 2020.

<sup>6</sup> On the church fathers' view of Mithraism, see Carsten Colpe, "Die Mithramysterien und die Kirchenväter" in *Romanitas et Christianitas: Studia J.H. Waszink*, ed. W. den Boer, et al. (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 29-43.

<sup>7</sup> I *Apol.* 66; *Dial. Typho* 70; see also Tertullian: *Praes.* 40; *de Bapt.* 5; *de Corona* 13. Justin, who was born in Samaria (beginning of *Typho*), came into contact with Christianity in Ephesus (ii *Apol.*). He then came to Rome where he headed a Christian school and presumably first encountered Mithraism [*The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) p. 570].

<sup>8</sup> Si le christianisme eût été arrêté dans sa croissance par quelque maladie mortelle, le monde eût été mithriaste. (*Marc-Aurele* [Paris, 1882], p. 579).

<sup>9</sup> Franz Cumont, "Preface to the French Edition" [1902], *The Mysteries of Mithra*, trans. from the 2nd rev. ed. by Thomas J. McCormack (New York: Dover, 1956), p. v.

<sup>10</sup> M.J. Vermaseren, *Mithras, The Secret God*, trans. Therese and Vincent Megaw (New York: Barnes & Noble 1963), p. 188.

<sup>11</sup> Vermaseren, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> *A Short Guide to St. Clement's, Rome* (Rome: Collegio San Clemente, 1987), p. 71.

<sup>13</sup> Filippo Coarelli, "Topografia Mithriaca di Roma", in *Mysteria Mithrae. Atti del Seminario Internazionale su "La specificità storico-religiosa dei Misteri di Mithra, con particolare riferimento alle fonti documentarie di Roma e Ostia."* EPRO 80, ed. Ugo Bianchi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), pp. 69-83: 77.

<sup>14</sup> See R. Krautheimer, *Rome*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 4; and the discussion by Arthur E.R. Boak, *Manpower Shortage and the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1955), pp. 6-7, 62.

<sup>15</sup> James E. Packer, "Housing and Population in Imperial Ostia and Rome", *Journal of Roman Studies* 57 (1967) 80-95, and "The Insulae of Imperial Ostia" *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 31 (1970): 20,491—24,491; Raissa Calza, *Ostia* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1959): 36,000; Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 532-4: 58,000. See Richard Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 276 n. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Boak, pp. 7, 9-14.

<sup>17</sup> F.G. Meyer, "Römische Bevölkerungsgeschichte und Inschriftenstatistik," *Historia* II [1954], pp. 318-51; Boak, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> Coarelli, p. 77.

<sup>19</sup> Although Boyle calculates that the Mithraeum of S. Clemente would hold only 30 to 40 persons, many of the Roman mithraea are considerably larger, for example, those of the Circus Maximus, S. Prisca, or S. Stefano Rotundo, suggesting a larger average figure for accommodations in Roman Mithraea generally.

<sup>20</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that a Mithraic "congregation" is limited in size to the number of initiates which a given sanctuary could accommodate at one "sitting." The public locations of many of the larger Roman mithraea, in the Baths of Caracalla, for example, suggests some may not have served a fixed residential population at all.

<sup>21</sup> Krautheimer, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> See Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1987), p. 268.

<sup>23</sup> Krautheimer, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Fox, p. 268.

<sup>25</sup> E. Lissi Caronna, EPRO 104 (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1986).

<sup>26</sup> "The Environment of Ostian Mithraism" in *Mithraism in Ostia*, ed. Samuel Laeuchli (Northwestern University Press, 1967), pp. 22-45: 38-40.

<sup>27</sup> Coarelli, p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> Mithraism appeared in the West in the mid-second century, after Christianity. Both experienced rapid growth in Rome during the third century. On the fascination of "eastern wisdom" for the educated classes of Rome, see Arthur Darby Nock, "The Genius of Mithraism", *Journal of Roman Studies* 27 (1937), pp. 108-113: 111; and Gordon, p. 110. J. B. Ward-Perkins [*Roman Imperial Architecture* (New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 185] notes that available space had already become a problem in Rome by late Republican times.

<sup>29</sup> M. J. Vermaseren and C.C. van Essen, *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), pp. 241-2; Reinhold Merkelbach, *Mithras* (Königstein/Ts.: Hain, 1984), p. 250.

<sup>30</sup> Boyle, pp. 6-12. William L. MacDonald (*The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965, p. 155) notes that earlier buildings were

often filled in or their structures utilized to establish a substantial foundation for new construction. Vitruvius (6.8.1-7) emphasized the importance to Roman architects of strong foundations. Stone members of demolished buildings, including sculpture, were sometimes broken up and used for aggregate, a necessary component of the concrete used for foundation slabs and for weight bearing structures in Roman construction (MacDonald, p. 149).

<sup>31</sup> See H. Bloch, "A New Document of the last Pagan Revival in the West, 393-394 A.D." *Harvard Theological Review* 38 (1945), 199-244; and "The Pagan Revival in the West at the End of the Fourth Century" in A. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 193-218; and J.F. Matthews, "Symmachus and the Oriental Cults" *Journal of Roman Studies* 83 (1973), pp. 175-195.

<sup>32</sup> Bloch, "The Pagan Revival", pp. 201-3; Matthews, pp. 179 n. 31, 180.

<sup>33</sup> See also 1.7,17 and 1.11,1; *The Saturnalia*, trans., intro. and notes, Percival Vaughan Davies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

<sup>34</sup> Bloch, "A New Document", pp. 206-7.

<sup>35</sup> Hans Leisegang has argued that the astrological rationale assumed by Macrobius differs from that of Greek scientific astrology by attributing a hypercosmic locus for the controlling solar power, ["The Mystery of the Serpent" in Joseph Campbell (ed.), *The Mysteries*, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks, vol. 2, trans. Ralph Manheim and R.F.C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), pp. 194-273: 201-203].

<sup>36</sup> Trans., intro. and notes by R.H. Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor: The Relationes of Symmachus. A.D. 384* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

<sup>37</sup> Dwight Nelson Robinson, "Symmachus and the Pagan Revival", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* XLVI (1905), pp. 87ff.; H. Block, "The Last Pagan Revival", p. 203.

<sup>38</sup> H. Block, "A New Document," p. 211, and his tabulation at the conclusion of the article; Gordon (p. 111) counts sixteen fourth century senators known to have been Mithraists, most holding the rank of Father.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, the star-map in the illustrated manuscript of Cicero's translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* (MS Harley 647, London: British Museum) (*Die Karolingischen Miniaturen*, ed. W. Koehler and F. Mutherich. Vol. 4: *Die Hofschule Kaiser Lothars: Einzelhandschriften aus Lotharingen: Tafeln* [Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1971], Tafel IV, 74) which most scholars argue is an eighth or ninth century copy from ancient originals (e.g., Georg Thiele, *Antike Himmelsbilder* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1898], pp. 152-4), but which W. Y. Ottley dates to the second or third century ("On a Manuscript of Cicero's Translation of Aratus", *Archaeologie* 26 [1836], pp. 47-214). On the tauroctony as astrological image, see, in addition to Beck, David Ulansey, "Mithraic Studies: A Paradigm Shift?" *Religious Studies Review* 13, 2 (1987), pp. 104-110, and *The Origin of the Mithraic Mysteries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>40</sup> Gordon, p. 96.

<sup>41</sup> Luther H. Martin, "Those Elusive Eleusinian Mystery Shows", *Helios* 13, 1 (1986), pp. 17-31: n. 83.

<sup>42</sup> Merkelbach, pp. 153-188.

<sup>43</sup> Gordon, p. 95.

<sup>44</sup> Nock, p. 108.

<sup>45</sup> Gordon, p. 95; see the discussion of problems of reorganizing and disciplining the army and the bureaucratic administration of the empire at the end of the

third and the beginning of the fourth centuries by M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 510-14.

<sup>46</sup> Rostovtzeff, p. 522.

<sup>47</sup> The details of Constantine's economic policy is unknown, [Jacob Burchhardt, *Jacob Burckhardt, The Age of Constantine the Great*, trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Pantheon, 1949), p. 340] however, he inherited a system which never had established a fixed budget or stable reserves. In case of emergency, "the usual way of getting the money.... was by means of extraordinary taxation or by means of requisites and confiscations" [Rostovtzeff, pp. 515-6]. It is well known that Constantine financed and embellished his new Eastern capitol at Constantinople at the expense of pagan temples and their treasuries.

<sup>48</sup> One of the most important problems faced by Constantine, as for Diocletian before him, was the stabilization and organization of the power of the emperor [Rostovtzeff, pp. 506-10].

<sup>49</sup> Fox, p. 666.

<sup>50</sup> Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 132.

<sup>51</sup> See Alan Cameron, "Gratian's Repudiation of the Pontifical Robe", *Journal of Roman Studies* 58 (1968), pp. 96-9.

<sup>52</sup> Barrow, p. 4-5.

<sup>53</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 250-54.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Brown, "Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 51 (1961), pp. 1-11: 4.

<sup>55</sup> F.H. Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), Vol. II, p. 378.

<sup>56</sup> Dudden, p. 391.

<sup>57</sup> Ambrose XVII, 1; trans. in Brian Croke and Jill Harries, *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1982), a useful collection of texts for understanding the "pagan revival"

<sup>58</sup> XVIII, 30.

<sup>59</sup> For example, by Lactantius. See the discussion by Fox, 659-61.

<sup>60</sup> E.g. Justin, i *Apol.* 9, 14, 25-6.

<sup>61</sup> Nock, p. 113.

## RELIGIOUS CONTACTS IN BYZANTINE PALESTINE

GEDALIAHU G. STROUMSA

In 382, Gregory of Nyssa went to Palestine on ecclesiastical business. What he saw in Jerusalem did little to endear its inhabitants to him. "Nowhere else on earth are people more prone to killing each other", he wrote home, and his words strike the modern observer as possessing some ominous and eerie permanence. Elsewhere, Gregory tries to dissuade his correspondent from undertaking a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. According to him, God can be found in Cappadocia as well.<sup>1</sup> Gregory's strikingly reticent attitude towards the Holy Places, which had been gaining high status throughout the Christian world during the fourth century, requires explanation. The ambivalences inherent to the complex and evolving religious situation in Byzantine Palestine—and in particular to Christian attitudes towards non-Christians—can shed some light on the crystallization process through which different religious communities were living in an uneasy cohabitation before the Islamic conquest.<sup>2</sup>

From one conversion to another, from the fourth to the seventh century, Byzantine Palestine remained in many ways a rather special place. Despite its privileged status, it never became one clearly defined entity, be it from the geographic and administrative, the ethnic or even the religious point of view.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it should be noted from the outset that the 'Holy Land' did not necessarily refer to Palestine as a whole, but rather to the very vaguely defined land 'belonging' to the Holy City.<sup>4</sup> In a sense, Palestine had less an identity of its own than other Near Eastern lands such as Egypt, Armenia, or even Syria. The religious and ethnic strife which plagued Palestine during our period is particularly complex. The boundaries of the religious communities were defined to a great extent in the process of confrontation with other communities, and the new shape they took as a result would have a notable impact in the future, on the community unified under God's Caliph rather

than the Christian Emperor. This shape and this process can be observed particularly well in Byzantine Palestine.<sup>5</sup>

To a great extent, the Christian elite in Palestine was a society of immigrants, who had come to the Holy Land to practice there the new monastic virtue of *xeniteia* i.e. learning to become a stranger on earth.<sup>6</sup> The monastic immigrants were confronted with a multiplicity of ethno-religious groups living in less than perfect harmony on the land. It is this confrontation, together with the religious intolerance inherent to monotheist tradition, which gave rise to a new sense of collective identity within the communities, as well as to a demonization of the outsiders. This collective identity was neither purely ethnic nor purely religious; in order to describe it we may follow the suggestion of the folklorist Alan Dundes and use the term 'folk identity'.<sup>7</sup>

For more than half a century before Gregory visited the country, since Constantine's conversion, both Palestine and Jerusalem had been submitted to an intensive transformation process, concretized by the new churches established throughout the land thanks to the devotion of Helena, Constantine's mother, and of course with the help of the imperial treasury.<sup>8</sup> Both the land (in the vague, limited sense referred to above) and the city had been redefined as *holy*, promoted to a new status in the Christian system of beliefs which was fast becoming the official ideology of the Roman Empire. From 'the holy places', a new concept 'the holy land', *hagia gē*, was soon coined; the expression appears already in sixth century monastic texts from the Judean wilderness.<sup>9</sup> A similar sanctification process may be traced concerning Jerusalem, the home of the mother-church. After having been known since 135 as Aelia Capitolina, it had regained its name of old and was fast becoming the spiritual center, or at least one of the spiritual centers, of the triumphant religion. Although a relatively minor urban center, Jerusalem had become by the mid-fifth century one of the five patriarchal sees, on a par with Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria.<sup>10</sup> This had by no means been the case in pre-Nicene Christian writings, where the birthplace of the new religion was first and foremost identified as the city of Christ's killers.<sup>11</sup> But now it was 'the holy city', a place of pilgrimage from the four corners of the *oikoumenē*.

It was precisely against this new status, or rather against the new religious attitudes which it reflected, that Gregory protested. The *engouement* with pilgrimage, to be sure, could usually lure only a limited number of affluent people (among them many a Roman matrona) into a trip to the Holy Land, or rather the Holy Lands. The grand tour included, more often than not, a visit to some of the famous holy men who had taken to make the desert bloom with the flowers of the spirit in Egypt and in Syria, to their pillars, their caves, their monasteries or their tombs.<sup>12</sup> Many poorer pilgrims who could not afford a return ticket went nonetheless, and stayed as monks.<sup>13</sup> In any case, the attraction of the Holy Land was fast modifying the structure of Christianity, encouraging patterns of religious behavior which were quite independent of the theologians' influence.

The monastic newcomers to the Holy Land had come from both East and West, although their respective situations cannot be described in quite symmetrical terms.<sup>14</sup> The Latin speakers were a minority within the Christian population of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which could once be compared to the small society of white Russian émigrés in Paris between the World Wars. But they often developed rather close links with the local ecclesiastical elite, and cultivated too many contacts to be adequately described as living in a cultural ghetto of sorts. Yet, it seems fair to state that they never became quite integrated to the surrounding society.

In one of his most interesting letters about the nature of the land, Jerome notes that the holy men of Palestine are all foreigners (an argument meant to speak against the Jewish belief in the sanctity inherent to the land itself).<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Cyril of Scythopolis notes in his hagiography of Euthymius, the Armenian founder of coenobitic monasticism in the Judean wilderness, that of all his disciples, only one was a native of Palestine. Their various cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds help to explain why the Christian elites of the Holy Land seem to have retained minority sensitivities for a long time.<sup>16</sup> More than elsewhere, perhaps, the religious conflicts in Byzantine Palestine preserve patterns of communal conflict. One could almost speak of a land of *peregrini*: Jerome, the *homo ciceronianus* from Dalmatia in his Bethlehem cell, keeping remarkably well in touch with the world at large through his extensive cor-

respondence;<sup>17</sup> Eutychius, the founder of monasticism in the Judean wilderness, coming, as many of his followers, from Armenia;<sup>18</sup> the Egyptians Isaiah and Barsanuphius in the surroundings of Gaza;<sup>19</sup> or the Monophysite leaders John of Beith-Rufina and especially Peter the Iberian, who transformed Maiuma, Gaza's port, into a stronghold of anti-Chalcedonian resistance, established upon a core of autochthonous 'old believers' and which held fast until Justinian eventually broke it (although Severus of Antioch had failed to bring Palestine into Monophysite orbit).<sup>20</sup>

The varied ethnic origins of the Christian elites may also account for the noticeable absence of a local theological school. Jerusalem remained too cosmopolitan in character to permit the development of a tradition of its own. Perhaps one should refer to it as to an *ouranopolis*,<sup>21</sup> rather than a full-fledged *metropolis*. Its theologians usually exhibited either Antiochene or Alexandrian and Origenist influences. As a whole, the Holy Land remained a refuge and a pole of magnetic attraction—an attraction reflected, for instance, by the coming to Jerusalem of Pelagius in the early years of the fifth century—rather than a genuine center endowed with a natural hinterland of its own. In any case, Jerusalem and Palestine retained remarkably good links with overseas centers.

During the course of the fourth century, the fast sliding in imperial legislation from religious toleration, through religious privilege, to almost a monopoly of orthodox Christianity, had in the Holy Land in particular very direct repercussions on the relationships between the communities, or more precisely on Christian attitudes towards other communities. In other words, social relations became, much more than under the pagan emperors, invested with religious dimensions and implications. The various religious communities were not quite alien to each other. Commerce, at least, brought people into some contact, although usually on a modest scale. From the few reports in the rabbinic sources—which, to be sure, are usually rather laconic—we can infer that the daily contacts between pagans and Jews did not amount on the whole to very much.<sup>22</sup> The same must have been true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the relations of Jews with the Christians.

Both Greek and Aramaic served as *linguae francae*, and diglossia seems to have been widespread in Palestine. Egeria is a witness of



this situation, when she describes in her *Travels* how the liturgy at the *Anastasis* was being translated from Greek into Aramaic for the benefit of those who did not understand Greek.<sup>23</sup> One may also refer to two Christian texts from both ends of our period. In his *Vita Hilarionis*, Jerome reports about a meeting between the thaumaturge and the native (non Christian) population of Elusa (a town in the North-West of the Negev to become the capital of *Palestina Salutaris* after the partition of 358), at the occasion of a pagan festival of the morning star. The crowd surrounds the holy man, asking him in the semitic vernacular to bless them: “*Barekh!*”<sup>24</sup> And John Moschus tells us in his *Pratum Spirituale* how a monk addressed a woman in her native Semitic tongue: “*Legō autēi hebraisti*” [i.e. in Aramaic, rather than in Hebrew].<sup>25</sup>

These examples are enough to testify about the existence of some contact between the communities. But a smattering of knowledge was never a guarantee against prejudice, in the Near East as elsewhere. On the contrary, one may argue that the acquaintance with the alien deprived the latter of any of the exotic charm and seductive power which were often attached to Eastern peoples and their presumed traditional wisdom.

Some remarks should be devoted here to basic relations between competing and conflicting systems of thought in Late Antiquity. These remarks are not necessarily specific to Palestine, but are needed in order to understand the implications of the religious revolution in the Holy Land. The fact that inter-communal contacts remained minimal does not mean that there was no shared way of life, regulated by similar patterns and ruled, equally for all, by the whims of the climate. Prayers for rain, for instance, crossed the religious boundaries. There was indeed a *koinos bios*, but it was never recognized as such, never translated into conscious feelings of closeness. In a small world of micro-climates and clashing minorities with no clear majority group, or at least no group perceiving itself as a natural majority and acting accordingly, identity was often reduced to show business. A person was what he or she claimed and showed to be. Language, or at least accent, added to traditional dress and to food customs, in a word appearance, probably defined one rather well.<sup>26</sup>

In Late Antiquity, pagans, Jews and Christians shared not only a way of life, but also what might be called a *religious koinē*, i.e. similar patterns of religious behavior. This *koinē* covered the huge if amorphic field of religious practices and beliefs that change least, or most slowly, with time. The most obvious example of such practices and beliefs is probably the field of magic, which one is tempted to call, to borrow Descartes' words, "la chose du monde la mieux partagée". Bowls, phylacteries, incantations of various sorts, belong to all denominations; even their language, both in Greek and in Aramaic documents, often seems to cross 'official' religious boundaries. One could perhaps speak in this context of *cold* (as opposed to *hot*, in Levi Straussian parlance) religious history. Besides radical differences in theological outlook, both through time and between groups, some patterns seemed to be endowed with a certain permanence; beliefs in spiritual beings, angels or demons, or magical practices, would have been obvious topics of this religious *koinē*. But it should be at once pointed out that this closeness too usually remained hidden and unacknowledged, since relations with other religions or deviant interpretations of the Christian message had been defined by orthodox Christianity exclusively in terms of polemics—again quite a new phenomenon in the classical world.<sup>27</sup>

Needless to say, the utmost importance of polemics in the crystallization of religious identities in late antiquity did in no way entail close relations or some kind of understanding between the various religious groups. In religious polemics, as in other kinds of polemics, one does not speak to each other, but rather to oneself about the other, the demonized other. The patterns of self-definition achieved through this very special *genre* deserve a study of their own. Suffice it here to say that these texts often seem to border on the incantatory rather than on any rational pondering of arguments. Their goal is not to convince, but to strengthen already existing conviction. Indeed, cases of genuine religious dialogue can be safely said to have been inexistant in our period.

The insistence of common patterns of life and religious attitudes is not intended to deny the radically new sensitivities introduced into the pagan world by Christianity. Without resorting to teleological reasoning, we should recognize that the impressive vic-

tory of Christianity over the hearts and minds must have been founded on some advantages of the new *Weltanschauung* over existing systems. In his remarkable study of the Spaniards' conquest of America, Tvetan Todorov shows that the Indians, who had a very sophisticated symbolic view of the cosmos and of man's place in it, were nonetheless deeply lagging behind the *Conquistadores* in the field of inter-human communications—a weakness that proved fatal to them.<sup>28</sup> It is impossible to dwell on this important issue in the present context, but we should at least note the decisive advantage held by the Christian world-view over its pagan rivals (including the major philosophical systems, Platonism and Stoicism) in the idea of religious truth. This idea offered a new pole through which the empire could be unified. It entailed a radically new concept of identity, founded exclusively on criteria of religious truth, rather than on cultural or ethnic criteria, as had been the case until then. Together, religious identity and a new approach to the state's ideology ensured that the religious nonconformist would become rather quickly an outsider, the outsider *par excellence*.<sup>29</sup>

The victory of Christianity and its Establishment meant that throughout the empire the main criterion of identity, which since hellenistic times had been cultural, had now become religious. In the ancient world, *barbaros* designated him who did not speak Greek, and then, more broadly, an alien to Greco-Roman culture.<sup>30</sup> Even the imperial cult, the observance of which was required of all citizens of the empire, functioned mainly as a duty of *civil* religion, which did in no way prevent other religious affiliations. Christianity was a religion of a new kind, which cut across all barriers. Class, ethnicity, language, none of these was considered a hindrance which could prevent one from joining the Church. Believers were spread even beyond the empire's borders. Hence, refusal to acknowledge Christ as Savior became, soon after Constantine's conversion, the main criterion for defining the outsider. Before the end of the fourth century, with Theodosius I, this perception was enshrined in imperial legislation. The famous edict *Cunctos Populos*, published in Thessaloniki in 380 by Theodosius, defined Christianity as the state religion. When everybody could and should belong, those who refused to do so were held fully responsible. According to this conception there was no, or almost

no, neutral outsider. It is this attitude which explains the tendency to demonize the outsider, in particular the heretic and the Jew, which has been so widespread in Christian history.<sup>31</sup>

When we seek to unveil the roots of the specific kind of religious intolerance in the Christian empire, the significance of the new emphasis on *religious truth* among Christian thinkers can hardly be overemphasised. Together with the unity and unicity of God, any monotheistic system is bound to insist on the idea of a single truth in religious matters.<sup>32</sup> What was not truth was error, could in no way remain 'value-free', independent of and unconnected to the Christian message. It was not the activist monks, but the practicing pagans, chased from the *templa* and moving into *fana* deep in the countryside in order to practice their cult, who were defined as *fanatici*.

The new centrality of *truth* in religious matters, coupled with the emphasis on religion as a prime factor of identity, radically transformed the status of religious outsiders. Two Latin lapidary formulas express this attitude well. On the one hand, *anima naturaliter christiana*, coined by one of the first Latin Christian writers, Minucius Felix, implies the universalist self-perception of early Christianity, coextensive in theory with human nature despite its revelatory character. On the other hand, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, the famous, (or should one say infamous?), phrase of Cyprian adopted and popularized by Augustine during his fight with the Donatists. These two formulas are not poles apart, as they might appear *prima facie*. Rather, they reinforce each other in their main implication, namely the rapid growth of religious intolerance into a central element of religious, and also political, behaviour in the Christian empire.<sup>33</sup> Still *religio illicita* at the beginning of the fourth century, Christianity had managed before the century was over to either outlaw, delegitimize, persecute or greatly impede in their normal life all competitors, from within (the heresies) as well as from without. To be sure, daily *praxis* did not necessarily follow patterns shaped by theologians, yet the coercive powers of the church and its close relationships with political authorities greatly contributed to the long-term shaping of patterns of thought and of behaviour throughout the Christian realm. From now on, the real outsider, the 'other', would be defined in religious rather than in

social, ethnic or cultural terms. This new situation entailed heightened tensions between the religious groups.

One could have expected the attitudes briefly described above to have been prevalent in Byzantine Palestine. To some degree they were indeed, but the very *de facto* pluralism of the population qualified them to some extent. Christian attitudes towards Jews, Hellenized pagans and Arabs in Palestine present some interesting characteristics to which we shall now turn.

Due to its special character, Palestine was kept in some ways under particularly close watch from imperial quarters. When Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem around the middle of the fifth century, converted to orthodoxy (that is to say, accepted the emperor's line against the Monophysite view on matters of dogma), the ecclesiastical rank of the city was upgraded into a Patriarchate.<sup>34</sup> The move was sealed in 455, when Eudocia, in Jerusalem, was reconciled with the emperor.<sup>35</sup> Such a symbolical importance had not always been the case.

Before the Peace of the Church, relatively little can be inferred from our dearth of sources about the development of Christianity in Palestine. The only monographic source, Eusebius's *The Palestinian Martyrs*, sheds light mainly on the late third and early fourth centuries. Two trends about this development, however, appear quite clearly. First, the relatively small scale and belatedness of the Christianization process.<sup>36</sup> Related to this fact, perhaps, is the lack of evidence for serious clashes between Christians and Jews in the second and third centuries. As Saul Liebermann reminds us, despite the Jews' national humiliation Judaism retained its status of *religio licita*; and the Palestinian Jews do not seem to have suffered martyrdom under the pagan Roman empire.<sup>37</sup>

Writing in the mid-fifth century, the ecclesiastical writer Sozomen is so puzzled by the following paradox that he states it at the very beginning of his *History of the Church*: at a time when even the Barbarians are converting, only the Jews have not yet recognized Christ.<sup>38</sup> It may not be irrelevant that Sozomen himself was a native of Palestine; he tells us that his grandfather, who had been converted by Hilarion, belonged to the first Christian community in the area around Gaza. It stands to reason that precisely in Palestine, Jewish stubbornness in refusing to admit the claims of

*Verus Israel* would strike the Christians as particularly offensive. The specific tension inherent to the nature of the relationships between Christians and Jews was fueled by a fact which has only begun to be recognized at its true value in recent scholarship. Even as late as the fourth century, Judaism, far from having become fossilized and retrenched upon itself, was actively and successfully proselytizing.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, the Christians had a particular theological argument with the Jews about Palestine. As mentioned above, antiterritorial tendencies, already perceptible in the New Testament, had carried the day in Christian writings until the fourth century. But now everything was changed. The new Christian attitude had given the Holy Land a new ideal unity and special quality which matched that of the Jewish *Eretz Israel*.

In Palestine even more than elsewhere, the fourth century represented the real watershed. Despite Origen's school in Caesarea, which provided a major intellectual and spiritual gravity center in the third century, Christianity seems to have made only slow progress in its native land before Constantine's conversion. As late as towards the end of the fourth century, when the state's power was massively thrown on the side of the church, it seems that populations, both urban and rural, were sometimes rather reluctant to accept Christianity.<sup>40</sup>

This fact may be due to the above-mentioned history of religious and ethnic pluralism in a land which had never been perceived as a single entity by its inhabitants. Only the coastal cities were thoroughly Hellenized. Caesarea, the provincial capital, had been more rapidly Christianized, but cities such as Ascalon and particularly Gaza remained for some time pagan strongholds. The Samaritans, who during their revolt were to offer a serious military opposition to Justinian's troops, had expanded beyond their mountainous region, and were to be found also in the cities.<sup>41</sup> The Arab tribes, known to the Romans and Byzantines as *sarakênoi*, lived mainly in the Judean wilderness and in the Negev, as well as in the Sinai.<sup>42</sup> The Jews, prohibited by Hadrian from living in Jerusalem (the decree was renewed and reinforced by Constantine),<sup>43</sup> had stayed in the neighbouring villages, and throughout the Judean hills, although their main population centers were in the Galilee.

Later on, in order to avoid as far as possible the heavy hand of the Byzantine authorities, the Jews moved also to more excentric and isolated areas, such as the Jordan valley. Imperial design could not transform this ethno-religious mosaic into a monolith, i.e. a society united through the new faith. What it could and did achieve was to grant the Christians religious predominance.

Jerusalem offered a case *sui generis*. Here both the Christian ambivalence and the effects of the transformation were at their peak. Eusebius is one of our main witnesses of the sanctification of the city where Christ had been killed, as well as one of the major artisans of this process. In theory, at least, Jerusalem remained forbidden for Jews, but no imperial edict could erase the Jewish dimension of Jerusalem, the city of David and the *locus* of Solomon's temple. As Amnon Linder has shown, this dimension was prominent in the Christian Hierosolymitan liturgical tradition, which emerged in the fourth century and was to have such a major impact on the overall development of Christian liturgy.<sup>44</sup> By the early fourth century, various eschatological trends in early Christian thought, which had ventilated hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple, had been suppressed and rejected as heresy, but not so the *Jewish* hopes for the return to Zion and the rebuilding of the Temple.

Jewish messianic and revivalist trends, similar to those known later in the Orient as the *avelei Sion* (mourners of Zion) were no doubt greatly encouraged by Julian's short lived attempt, in 363, to rebuild the Temple, and equally deflated the following year with the abandonment of the project and the Apostate's death. Whatever his complex reasons for attempting to rebuild the Temple of the Jews might have been, they are not directly relevant to our present task.<sup>45</sup> It may nevertheless be noted here that the episode highlights the existence of some intellectual—one dare not call it religious—contact between pagans and Jews, at least on the tactical level, and often oriented against the Christians, the common enemy. Few other traces of such a contact are extant; one might refer to the correspondence between Libanius and the Patriarch in Tiberias, the leader of the Palestinian Jewish community.<sup>46</sup> In any case, the fear which had seized Christian intellectuals at the time of Julian's apostasy did not resolve either fast or easily, as Robert

Wilken has convincingly argued.<sup>47</sup> Its scars on the Christian psyche were still visible in the last years of the century, for instance of Chrysostom's writing, a point which has been convincingly argued by Wilken. What had affected Antiochene Christianity to such an extent must by the nature of things have had an even stronger impact on Palestinian Christianity.

We know from Eusebius's *Vita Constantini* that the emperor had already begun to isolate Jews socially and to discriminate against them on religious grounds as 'Christ's killers'. After Constantine, Constantius (337-361) began to limit the Jews' rights and privileges, ushering in a dark period for the Palestinian Jews. They were not yet forced, however, to transgress their religious laws. Jerome's works, in particular his biblical commentaries, reflect the new mood fairly well. The potential return of the Jews to the Holy land and their claims upon it seem to have preoccupied him a great deal. His above-mentioned letter to Dardanus is particularly telling.<sup>48</sup> In this small treatise, which reflects a more ambivalent attitude towards the land than elsewhere in his writings,<sup>49</sup> Jerome argues with the Jewish conception of the *promised land* (*terra repromissionis*). His basic argument in rejecting any particular inherent sanctity to a land which he paints in rather dark colors insists that it is only Christ who sanctified the land on which he lived. The letter shows traces of a major, although latent and implicit, theological argument between Palestinian Christians and Jews on the topic. Other ecclesiastical texts coming from fourth or fifth century Jerusalem, which I have analyzed elsewhere—by Cyril or by Hesychius for instance—strengthen this impression.<sup>50</sup>

About one Jewish group, the Christian attitude is particularly ambivalent. This group, a small one to be sure, was particularly meaningful precisely because it stood right across ideological and ethnic boundaries which were getting harder and harder to cross. The continued presence of Jewish-Christians in Palestine, perhaps even in Jerusalem (they saw themselves as the direct heirs of the mother church), at least up to the fifth century and probably throughout the Byzantine period does not seem anymore in doubt.<sup>51</sup> The ambivalence and the annoyance shown on the part of Christian authors towards them is not always expressed directly. Yet the traces of their presence in various texts can be identified with reasonable certainty.



If the existence of the Jewish-Christians appears to be so fraught with problems that it is hard even to follow their track, this stems from the very nature of their *community*. Origen had once said about the Ebionites that attempting to be both Jews and Christians, they ended up being neither. For both established communities—and it is irrelevant here that the Jews were fast becoming a disenfranchized community—the Jewish-Christians were at once within and without, and hence perceived as a doubly pernicious danger. They threatened not only the “orthodox” Jews’ and Christians’ claims for theological legitimacy, but also their very identity.

Despite the dearth of sources, it appears that in some cases at least, the Jewish-Christians were considered as Jews by Gentile Christians of Palestine. In one of his homilies, pronounced in the basilica of the *Anastasis* in 348, Cyril of Jerusalem, turning to the “Jews”, wonders why, since they worship Jesus Christ, they stick to the old name (i.e. *ioudaioi*), which remains limited to a geographic province, rather than adopting the new name of *christianoï*, now known throughout the *oikoumene*.<sup>52</sup> This testimony is buttressed by a similar remark on the Nazoreans by Epiphanius of Salamis.<sup>53</sup> It is easy to conceive that the growing community of the church *ex gentilibus* perceived the continued separate existence of even a small Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem or in its neighborhood as a threat to its legitimacy. In a word, all sides rejected the Jewish-Christian pretension to be at once *verus* and *vetus Israel*.

Towards the rabbinic Jews, Christian enmity was clearer. Under Byzantine rule, the Jews witnessed worsening legal and social standing, continuous insults, both intended or perceived as such, to their already wounded ethnic pride, religious frustrations, attempts at conversion, sometimes even pogroms.<sup>54</sup> The latter were more often than not enacted by thugs donning the monastic *schēma* like the vicious Bar Sauma and his band around the middle of the fifth century, roaming around the land and terrorizing the population.<sup>55</sup>

All these were probably frequent enough, although the sources are far too spotty to permit any precise reconstruction of the course of events during the fifth and the sixth centuries. In any case, it should not come on the least as a surprise if the Jews joined the Sasanian Persians in 614 and helped them in their conquest of Jerusalem and in the subsequent massacre of the city’s Christians,

which appears to have been on a large scale.<sup>56</sup> The Byzantine authorities, no doubt, had enough time to let the Jews pay for their treachery before the Holy City was to fall, this time for good, to the Muslim Arab invaders in 642.

In Palestine, where Hellenisation had been less thorough than in either Egypt or Syria, it remained largely limited to the population of the coastal cities. As a result of the religious revolution brought by the Christian victory, the meaning of *hellenismos*, stripped from most of its former cultural connotations, was rapidly changing, becoming more or less identified with the old-fashioned pagan religion, and its adepts perceived as reactionaries (to use an anachronistic term) and arch-heretics.

The coastal region, for instance, from Caesarea to Gaza, which was to provide one of the major Hellenic centers in late antiquity, could be said to belong to the Holy Land in the fourth century only in a loose sense, although strong links were developed between the Church in Jerusalem and that in Gaza throughout our period. In the early fifth century, these links are represented by the friendship between John II, patriarch of Jerusalem, and Mark the Deacon,<sup>57</sup> or a little later by the move of Peter the Iberian from Jerusalem to Gaza. The close relationships between the two cities seem to have been maintained throughout our period, since the eighth century witnesses the ecclesiastical writer Cosmas of Jerusalem becoming bishop of Maiuma, Gaza's harbor, in 743. Yet, the diverging lines taken by the development of the coastal cities are conditioned by their particular background.

What is most striking in the coastal cities is the remarkable strength of paganism there, in its various garbs, which had inherited a long tradition. From the Roman period, we know of the cult of Atagartis in Gaza, Ascalon and Jaffa. In this last city, the legend of Andromeda and Perseus was told as a local story. Yet pagan religious cults and Hellenistic culture, although present throughout Palestine, do not seem to have had a major impact inside the land. Carried mainly by merchants, they remained for the most part concentrated along the seashore and in a few major pagan cities such as Scythopolis or Sebastia. In the mountainous inland, including Jerusalem, which did not have a very large non-Christian Hellenized population, these cults and this culture were

less overwhelmingly present. Palestinian schools of rhetorics in the coastal cities were famous enough in the fourth century to have attracted, as a young Christian student, a Gregory Nazianzen.<sup>58</sup> Libanius, on his side, speaks of Gaza with respect, and has friends in Elusa.<sup>59</sup>

After the conversion of its Hellenized elites, these schools retained their fame. In the late fifth century and in the first half of the sixth century, barely a hundred years before the Islamic conquest, Choricus's discourses bespeak the vitality of Hellenic culture in Gaza. So does the active Christian Platonic circle of Gaza, with an Aeneas writing dialogues in the Platonic vein on the creation of the world or the immortality of the soul.<sup>60</sup> In Jerusalem, too, Hellenic literary culture is present in the fifth century, thanks in particular to the presence of the empress Eudocia, who surrounded herself with a literary *salon* of sorts, and cultivated her taste for writing poetry (of a rather mediocre quality).<sup>61</sup> One should add that even some of the monks happened to be men of letters, as is clear in the case of their most famous hagiographer, Cyril of Scythopolis.<sup>62</sup>

*The Life of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza*, by Mark the Deacon, is a remarkable text documenting in particular the Christianization of Gaza in the last years of the fourth century.<sup>63</sup> What is of special interest is to notice that until a relatively late date (towards the end of the fourth century), the Christian community seems to have remained a small minority—of at most a few hundred souls—in Gaza and its surroundings. The text also witnesses to the impressive resistance of the pagan population to the state-supported efforts of the Church in suppressing pagan cults and philosophical culture (the Julia presented in the extant version of the text as a Manichaean missionary appears to have been originally a philosopher).<sup>64</sup> Eventually, the great temple of Marnas, the pride of the Gazans, was indeed destroyed.<sup>65</sup> Similar clashes between pagans and Christians happened elsewhere. In Sebastia, for instance, the main Hellenistic center of Samaria, Rufinus keeps record of religious violence around shrines.<sup>66</sup>

Incidentally, it may not be pure chance if the first attested suppression of a pagan temple in which a bishop played some role happens to have taken place in fourth century Palestine. Eusebius

quotes from a letter of Constantine to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, and to the other bishops of Palestine, describing how a pagan temple at Mambre, near Hebron where Abraham had received the three angels of God, was destroyed and replaced with a church.<sup>67</sup>

The destruction of the Marneum in Gaza may remind the reader of the burning by the Christian mob of Alexandria's famous Serapeum, so well described by Rufinus in his *Ecclesiastical History*. The vignette is symbolical, in a way, of the proximity between Egypt and Gaza. It is through Gaza that Egyptian influences reach Palestine, then as in previous or later times. In particular, there is every reason to believe that it is through Gaza that the new phenomenon of monasticism reached Palestine in the late third and early fourth centuries. Famous holy men such as Abbot Isaiah or Barsanuphius had come from Egypt, where they had learned the new way of life, the new *politeia*.<sup>68</sup> Hilarion, the semi-legendary first monk of Palestine, himself born in Thavata, fifteen miles from Gaza, about 293, had been schooled in Alexandria, and then spent some months in "the inner desert" with Saint Anthony before returning to Palestine.

Incidentally, the heirs of Gazan spirituality—which does not seem to be related to the Christian Platonism that flourished in Gaza in the sixth century—were after the Islamic conquest to be oriented towards the Sinai peninsula, where their mystical inclinations were to reach full bloom. There it offered some of the most fragrant flowers of Byzantine mysticism, well after the Islamic conquest, with personalities such as John Climacus.

Yet this monastic spirituality should not be conceived as occurring among secluded communities of ascetics. The importance of the monks' role in the transmission of Christianity to the native population cannot be overrated. Cities like Elusa were flourishing before the seventh century, and had been Christianized by charismatic holy men such as Hilarion. In his *Vita Hilarionis*, Jerome describes Hilarion's appeal to non-Christian inhabitants, semi-sedentarized Arabs who would flock to him.

Replacing the Temple's Holy of Holies, the Golgotha was now construed as the new *omphalos*.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, the Barbarian nations were undergoing a fast process of conversion, and hence the

concept of “barbarian” itself became radically transformed. The whole world would soon be Christian, or so it seemed. It is one of the major paradoxes of the new Holy Land that right next to the center of the universe one stepped into the fringes of the civilized world. One may rightfully speak of civilization, since *Christianitas* was being more and more closely related to the *Romanitas* of which Jerome was the High Priest in the post-Constantinian empire.<sup>70</sup>

Jerusalem was both the *oikoumene*’s center and periphery. Right outside the City stretched the Judean wilderness, appropriately called ‘Jerusalem’s desert’ by the monks who were settling it at a fast pace in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>71</sup> The monks had not simply retreated from the city. In many ways, their monasteries had become its intellectual and spiritual axis, as can be seen from the seriousness of the arguments fought in these monasteries over the Origenian controversy in the early sixth century.<sup>72</sup> This pole was also perceived as eminently political, and the monks’ often stormy relations with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem form an important chapter in the history of the Palestinian church. The monastic *lavra*, the typical Palestinian form of monastic community, was at the crossroad between Egyptian coenobitism which first shaped Palestinian monasticism in the fourth century and the Syrian, more individual, forms of ascetic life which became more influential in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>73</sup> This monasticism played in our period a distinct and major role in the life of ideas. Although to some extent the *lavrai* remained isolated Greek-speaking enclaves, this role was not only intellectual, but also involved and active part in the Christianization of the desert “Barbarians”. These Arab nomadic tribes, the *sarakēnoi*, were feared for their ability to stage successful razzias against border settlements.<sup>74</sup> Their threat was less serious from a military point of view, but more persistent, than that of the Huns, who had brought destruction on a large scale in North East Syria at the turn of the fifth century, and had sown panic in Palestine.

Our main witness about Judean wilderness monasticism at its acme is, of course, Cyril of Scythopolis. His hagiographies possess much of historical value, and through him we can somewhat enter the monks’ *Sitz im Leben*.<sup>75</sup> They had neighbours in the desert, not only the tribes which they were actively seeking to convert thanks

to their thaumaturgic powers, but also competitors vying for the nomads' spiritual allegiance, motley groups of cranks or heretics, mostly located around the shores of the Dead Sea: Jewish-Christians, Gnostics, Baptists of various affiliations and Manichaeans. Cyril sometimes refers to them, but we also know of their continued existence thanks to John of Damascus, a denizen of the great monastery of Mar Saba, located midway between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, in the first half of the eighth century.<sup>76</sup> *Arabia haeresium ferax*: the dictum seems to reflect well the secret life of the desert. It should not come as a surprise when we hear of Manichaean converts among the Arab tribes, or when we note some striking Judaizing among them—or at least practices perceived as such by the ecclesiastical writers.<sup>77</sup>

It is through the Christianization of the nomads that the monks were contributing to the expansion of Christianity. They were wise enough to realize soon that the success of the enterprise demanded the integration of the newly converted into the clergy. Euthymius, for instance, managed to appoint as bishop a tribal chief, Aspabetus, whose son Therebon he had cured and converted. Aspabetus became known as Peter of the *Parembolai*.<sup>78</sup> Some of these Arab converts reached influential positions in the Church. The monophysite writer John Rufus, for instance, was an Arab of Ascalon.<sup>79</sup> The most famous case, however, is that of Mavia, queen of the Saracens.<sup>80</sup> After having organized for some time attacks against the Palestinian *limes* and the *limes arabicus* south-east of Bostra, she converted to Christianity and around 370 had Moyses, an orthodox monk, consecrated as a bishop to the Arabs (despite the Arianism of the emperor Valens). Through her story we discover another noticeable aspect of the tribes' conversion, its military dimension. Converting them was indeed—or so it was perceived—the best way of securing the integration of tribes which had already for some time played a buffer role between the Byzantines and the Sasanians. Following the new parameters of identity in the Christian empire, political independence was possible only as a sequel to religious autonomy. This fact explains at least partly the tendency to religious split which resulted in the emergence and development of the Monophysite and Nestorian churches in the

East (although not, of course, the birth of Monophysite or Nestorian conceptions).

Unfortunately, the few details that we are able to collect about religious change do not help much in understanding the ways in which groups—as distinct from individuals—converted in late antiquity (one should keep in mind what was noted above, namely that religious change is not necessarily identical with conversion). There was no more an Augustine among the Arabs of the Negev or of Judea than there was one among any of the other “barbarian” peoples of the Near East converting to Christianity, and we know pitifully little about their thoughts or feelings. In any case, events of earth-shaking power reshuffled the cards before long. In 634, it was not a band of thugs which prevented Sophornius, the patriarch of Jerusalem, from going to Bethlehem at Christmas. This time, the *troubles fête* were Saracens newly converted to another faith, that of their false prophet from Arabia. They were occupying the city of Christ’s birth in the all too real war they were waging on the Byzantine forces, and that they were soon to win in Palestine.<sup>81</sup>

The Islamic conquest brought upon Palestine as a whole, and upon Palestinian Christians in particular, some radical changes, first and foremost of a linguistic nature. Although Greek letters survived for some time, in particular within the monasteries, and continued throughout the eighth century to show signs of creativity, the new idiom, Arabic, was making fast headway.<sup>82</sup> Sidney Griffith was able to show recently that, partly due to their isolation from Constantinople, Palestinian Christians were the first of their faith to use Arabic as a respectable intellectual tool for the expression of theological ideas.<sup>83</sup> Since the Jews also began to use Arabic, a new *koine* was emerging, which was to render possible a quite new phenomenon throughout the Islamic realm: a theological exchange, real if limited, between monotheists.<sup>84</sup>

Ramsay MacMullen has suggested that the Islamization process in the Near East followed patterns rather similar to the Christianization process, often putting on potential neophytes economic, legal and social pressure rather than using more direct ways of coercion. Hence the Christians (and the Jews) would become second class citizens in the Islamic commonwealth.<sup>85</sup> This important observation should be tested in various specific contexts. I believe that

it offers a fruitful insight about fundamental historical processes, although MacMullen plays down the radical difference between monotheist attitudes towards other monotheists and towards pagans. A more precise understanding of the nature of the religious changes in Palestine towards the end of the Byzantine rule and during the first stages of the Islamic caliphate might be of crucial importance for our comprehension of the very nature of early Islam.<sup>86</sup>

In any case, the new ruling religion reversed a trend that we have seen growing under the Byzantines. Limits were put to religious intolerance. This was achieved through the combined pressure of two conditions, which we can observe intertwined in Palestine. The first, mentioned above, is the rapid predominance of a new intellectual *lingua franca*, which permitted a modicum of communication between the elites of the different faiths. The second was the fact that the Islamic conquest did not suppress the ethno-religious mosaic which we have seen established in late antiquity. Rather, the fact that they had fought against monotheists strengthened the tendency to grant some religious legitimacy, although limited and precarious, to the various communities in the land. Indeed, both Christianity and Islam recognized each other in an awkward way from the very beginnings of their encounter: as heresies, i.e. as distortions of the monotheist message, not as pagans. Hence, although the Muslims developed much faster than the Christians had a real sense of majority, thanks to their sweeping conquests, religious intolerance remained checked by the respect of the boundaries of the religious minorities. To sum up, the status of the Christians under Islam was meaningfully different from the status of pagans in the Christian realm.

A legend, preserved by Ibn Baṭrīq, alias Eutychius, Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century, has it that when the Caliph Omar al-Khattab conquered Jerusalem, the old patriarch Sophronius, after handing him the keys of the city, invited him to pray in the church of the Anastasis. To the gallant offer Omar replied even more gallantly. He declined the invitation, saying that he did not want the Muslim to reclaim the church after his death as a Muslim holy place.<sup>87</sup> He would rather remove the *omphalos* back to its original *locus*, the Temple mount.<sup>88</sup> Religious



power and religious pluralism had been secured as established in an uncomfortable, limited coexistence, but at least not quite exclusive of one another, in Palestine.

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<sup>1</sup> Gregory's two letters are published in P.G. 46, 1009-1016, and 1016-1024; see esp. 1012 D and 1013 C-D. In the Jaeger edition, see G. Pasquali, ed. *Gregorii Nysseni Epistolae* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), 13-27. On these texts see I. Grego, "San Gregorio Nysseno a Gerusalemme e lo scontro con i giudeo-cristiani", in his *I giudeo-cristiani nel IV secolo* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1982), 133-146. For a similar ambivalence towards Jerusalem on Jerome's part, see his epistle 58, to Paulinus (written in 396): "It is not to live in Jerusalem that is worthy, but to live there well". In this letter, Jerome advises Paulinus not to come on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

This article stems from a series of seminars given at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sciences Religieuses, in Paris, where I was appointed Directeur d'Etudes Associé in February 1987. I wish to thank the auditors of the seminars and in particular my hosts Pierre Geoltrain and Francis Schmidt for fruitful discussions.

<sup>2</sup> For a pertinent conceptual framing of the issues related to the study of religious changes in a given society, see R.F. Gombrich, *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 1-17.

<sup>3</sup> For general introductions to our period, see F.M. Abel, O.P., *Histoire de la Palestine*, II (Etudes Bibliques; Paris: Gabalda, 1952), and L. Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie christologiche* (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose, 18; Brescia: Paideia, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> The emergence and evolution of the concept of "Holy Land" in Christianity is studied in depth in a forthcoming book by R. Wiken; in the meantime, one is referred to his article "Heiliges Land", *T.R.E.*, 14, 684-694.

<sup>5</sup> S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: Chicago University, 1980), 8-10, lists the various ways in which the definition of the self is related to the confrontation with the alien, perceived as a hostile power. Relatively little attention has been devoted to the late antique and early Byzantine heritage of early Islam. For a recent approach along these lines, see J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> On this concept, see A. Guillaumont, "Le dépaysement comme forme d'ascèse dans le monachisme ancien", *Annuaire de l'Ecole Patrique des Hautes Etudes; Sciences Religieuses* 76 (Paris, 1968), 31-58; reprinted in Guillaumont, *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien: pour une phénoménologie du monachisme* (Bégrolles en Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1979), 89-116.

<sup>7</sup> See A. Dundes, "Defining Identity through Folklore", in A. Jacobson-Widding, ed., *Identity: Personal and Socio-Cultural, a Symposium* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wicksell, 1983), 235-261. For various anthropological approaches to problems of identity, cf. J.M. Benoist, ed., *L'Identité* (Paris: Grasset, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> On Helena's buildings, see in particular the chapter devoted to her in E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, A.D. 312-460* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> See for instance a letter written by Palestinian monks to Emperor Anastasius and quoted by Cyril of Scythopolis in his *Vita Sabae*, cf. 57, 152-157 Schwarz.

<sup>10</sup> For the evolution of Jerusalem's status, one might refer to the introduction of A.A. Stephenson, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem I* (Fathers of the Church, 61; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University, 1965). See also Z. Rubin, "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Conflict between the Sees of Caesarea and Jerusalem", in L.I. Levine, ed. *The Jerusalem Cathedra 2* (Jerusalem, Detroit: Ben-Zvi Institute, Wayne State University, 1982), 79-105.

<sup>11</sup> Bibliography in G.G. Stroumsa, "Which Jerusalem?", *Cathedra*, 11 (1979), 119-124 (in Hebrew).

<sup>12</sup> For a remarkable survey of pilgrimage in early Christianity, see P. Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> The best introduction to monasticism in the Holy Land is still D. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966). 13.

<sup>14</sup> In his Epistle 107.2, Jerome reckons that "everyday we receive in Jerusalem troops of monks coming from India, Persia, Ethiopia, ... Armenians, Huns, Goths, Scyths." Its rhetorical flourish notwithstanding, this text testifies to the cosmopolitan atmosphere in Jerusalem in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. A group not mentioned by Jerome and whose presence was felt early in Jerusalem are the Georgians. See R. Janin, "Les Géorgiens à Jérusalem", *Echos d'Orient*, 16 (1913), 32-38, 211-219. Hunt notes (*Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 151) that the establishment of the Christian Jerusalem contributed enormously to the cosmopolitan nature of the city's inhabitants.

<sup>15</sup> Epistle 129, to Dardanus, written after 413. Text and French translation in J. Lebourt, *Saint Jérôme, Lettres VII* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1961), 154-166. This letter is referred to by F. Stummer, "Die Bewertung Palästinas bei Hieronymus", *Oriens Christianus* 32, n. R. 10 (1935), 60-74, esp. 68-69; and by R. Wilken, "The Restoration of Israel in Biblical Prophecy: Christian and Jewish Responses in the Early Byzantine Period", in J. Neusner and E.S. Frerichs, eds., "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": *Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity* (Chico, Cal.: Scholars, 1985), 443-471.

<sup>16</sup> As pointed out by W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1972), 152, much of the rural population of Palestine had retained strong anti-Christian feelings.

<sup>17</sup> In "From Dalmatia to the Holy Land: Jerome and the World of Late Antiquity", *J.R.S.* 67 (1977), 166-171, E.D. Hunt describes Jerome's career as being at "the intersection of magnetic fields of various cultural foci" (168).

<sup>18</sup> Eutychius was born in Melitene, the capital of Lesser Armenia. On Armenians monks and pilgrims in Byzantine Palestine, see M.E. Stone, "An Armenian Pilgrim to the Holy Land in the Early Byzantine Era", in *Mélanges Bogharian, Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 18 (1987), 173-178.

<sup>19</sup> See D.J. Citty, "Abba Isaiah", *J.T.S.* n.s. 22(1971), 47-72, esp. 66.

<sup>20</sup> See R. Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer: ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895), as well as P. Devos, "Quand Pierre l'Ibère vint-il à Jérusalem?", *An. Bol.* 86 (1968), 337-350. Peter reached Jerusalem in 429-430.

<sup>21</sup> I borrow this term from C. Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem: vie monastique et confession dogmatique* (Théologie historique 20; Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 20.

<sup>22</sup> So D. Flusser, "Paganism in Palestine", in S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds. *The Jewish People in the First Century C.E.* (Assen, Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1065-1110, esp. 1093.

<sup>23</sup> Latin too was used as a third liturgical language in Jerusalem, as can be inferred from Gerontius's *Vita Melaniae*. Cf. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 152. For Egeria's *Travels*, see the new edition and translation of P. Maraval and U. du Bierzo, *Egérie, Journal de Voyage* (S.C. 296; Paris; Le Cerf, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> *Vita Hilarionis* 16. I have used the edition of A.A.R. Bastiaenesen, *Vita di Martino, Vita di Ilarione, in memoria di Paola* (Fondazione Lorenzo Valla; A. Montadori, 1975), 72-143 and notes, 291-317. The *Vita Hilarionis* was written in 386-391. Cf. I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 288-293. Jerome's probable source for his *Life* is Epiphanius, himself a disciple of Hilarion in some measure.

<sup>25</sup> Ch. 136, P.G. 87.3, 3000 A-B.

<sup>26</sup> On identity as show-business, cf. M. Fortes, "Problems of Identity and Person", in A. Jacobson-Widding, ed., *Identity*, 389-401.

<sup>27</sup> A comprehensive study of religious polemics in late antiquity, their forms and their role, is a major desideratum. J. Lim is approaching the topic in his Princeton PhD dissertation. In the meantime, see D. Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in Conflict* (Studia Post-Biblica 33; Jerusalem, Leiden: Magnes, Brill, 1982). On specific sides of the issue, see S. Stroumsa and G.G. Stroumsa, "Aspects of Anti-Manichaean Polemics in Late Antiquity and under Early Islam", *H.T.R.* 81 (1988), 27-58.

<sup>28</sup> T. Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique: la question de l'autre* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1982).

<sup>29</sup> In the pagan empire, the outsider had been defined in a very different way, as shown by R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1966). See also B. Kötting, *Religionsfreiheit und Toleranz im Altertum*, (Rheinisch-westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977).

<sup>30</sup> See E. Fascher, "Fremder", *R.A.C.* 8, 306-348.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Gager, *The Origins of Antisemitism* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1983), and cf. my review, in *Numen* 32 (1986), 287-289.

<sup>32</sup> The double truth theory in medieval philosophy and the late antique idea of esotericism related to mystical conceptions only confirm the primacy of Truth. On the latter, see G.G. Stroumsa, "Paradosis: traditions ésotériques dans le christianisme des premiers siècles", in P. Geoltrain, ed. *Les littératures apocryphes*, (Brépols, forthcoming).

<sup>33</sup> "If there were men who recommended tolerance and peaceful coexistence of Christians and pagans, they were rapidly crowded out.", writes A. Momigliano, in "Pagan and Christian historiography", in Momigliano, ed. *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 80.

<sup>34</sup> On Juvenal, see E. Honigsmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem", *D.O.P.* 5 (1950), 211-279.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. the chapter on Eudocia in Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*.

<sup>36</sup> The rythm of conversion remained rather slow for some time. It is only under Theodosius II that the Christians become a majority in Palestine. See L. Perrone, "Vie religieuse et théologie durant la première phase des controverses christologiques", *Proche Orient Chrétien* 27 (1977), 212-249, esp. 213.

<sup>37</sup> "Palestine in the Third and Fourth Centuries", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 36-37 (1946), 329ff., reprinted in his *Studies and Texts* (New York: Ktav, 1974), 112-179.

<sup>38</sup> Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I. 1, in J. Bidez, ed. and A.J. Festugière, transl., Sozomène, *Histoire ecclésiastique I-II* (Sources chrétiennes 306; Paris: Cerf, 1983), 108-113.

<sup>39</sup> This is emphasized by both Gager, *The Origins of Antisemitism*, and R.L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth Century* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage; Berkeley: University of California, 1983).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. n. 16 above.

<sup>41</sup> For a contemporary description of the Samaritan revolt, see Procopius of Caesarea, *Anecdota*, XI. 26 and XXVII. 27.

<sup>42</sup> On the original meaning of *sarakēnoi*, see the detailed discussion by I. Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984). 123-141. After the partition of Palestine in 358, the Sinai became known as *Palestina tertia*. Despite monastic presence, it remained known for a long time as Saracen land. Jerome speaks about "desertum Saracenorum, quod vocatur Faran". See *Onomasticon*, ed. Klostermann, 167-173. On the progress of Christianity in the area, see R. Devreesse, "Le Christianisme dans la péninsule sinaïtique des origines à l'arrivée des musulmans". *R.B.* 49 (1940), 205-223.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. A. Linder, "Roman Power and the Jews in Constantine's Time", *Tarbiz* 44 (1975), 95-143, esp. 136-141 (in Hebrew).

<sup>44</sup> A. Linder, "Jerusalem between Judaism and Christianity during the Byzantine Period", *Cathedra* 11 (1979), 109-117 (in Hebrew).

<sup>45</sup> On the various aspects of Julian's relations with the Jews, one can still consult J. Vogt, *Kaiser Julian und das Judentum: Studien zum Weltanschauungskampf der Spätantike* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939). On Julian's possible reasons to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, see A. Momigliano, "The Disadvantages of Monotheism for a Universal State", in his *On Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1987), 142-158, esp. 155-158. On the Christian perceptions of Julian's attempt and its failure, see David B. Levenson, *Julian and the Jerusalem Temple; the Sources and the Tradition* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

<sup>46</sup> These letters are translated and analysed by W.A. Meeks and R.L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries C.E.* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1978), 59-66. As a *restaurator templorum*, Julian gained the Jews' sympathy; for both, the Christians were the common enemy; cf. G.W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, Ma.; Harvard, 1978), 88-90. Modern Jerusalem is probably the only city with a street named after the emperor Julian.

<sup>47</sup> R.L. Wilken, "The Jews and Christian Apologetics after Theodosius I *Cunctos Populos*" *H.T.R.* 73 (1980), 451-471.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. n. 15 above.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Stummer, "Die Bewertung Palästinas bei Hieronymus", (cited n. 15 above). F.M. Abel, "Jérôme et Jérusalem", in *Miscellanea Geronimiana* (Rome: tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1920), 131-155, deals more with topography than with attitudes.

<sup>50</sup> G.G. Stroumsa, "*Vetus Israel*: les juifs dans la littérature hiérosolymitaine d'époque byzantine", *R.H.R.* 205 (1988), 115-131.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. "*Vetus Israel*", *passim*, for discussion and references.

<sup>52</sup> *Cat.* 10.16, P.G. 33, 681 C.

<sup>53</sup> *Panarion* 29.1.2, P.G. 41, 389 A.

<sup>54</sup> For a general overview, see M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule* (repr. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984).

<sup>55</sup> The monks' exactions were common knowledge in the empire. Elsewhere, but in a situation fairly similar to the one that obtained in Palestine, Symmachus, the head of Theodosius's cavalry, exclaimed after the arson of the Callinicum

synagogue in 388: "monachi multa scelera faciunt". On Bar Sauma's raids, see Z. Rubin, "Christianity in Byzantine Palestine—Missionary Activity and Religious Coercion", in L.I. Levine, ed. *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 3 (Jerusalem, Detroit: Ben Zvi Institute, Wayne State University, 1983), 97-111, esp. 107-108. Cf. E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4ème.-7ème. s.* (Civilisations et sociétés 48; Paris, Hagu: Mouton, 1977), 225-226.

<sup>56</sup> See for instance the description of the Armenian historian Sebeos, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, transl. F. Macler (Paris, 1904), 68. See also "Vie de Georges Koziba" *An. Bol.* 7 (1888), 134. Cf. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews*, 259-265. For the impact of the Persian conquest on Christian consciousness, see further the Greek and Arabic texts edited and translated by A. Couret, "La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses, en 614", *R.O.C.* 2 (1897), 125-164.

<sup>57</sup> On Mark, see G. Couilleau's article in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 10, 265-267.

<sup>58</sup> On these schools, see G. Downey, "The Christian Schools of Palestine: A Chapter in Literary History", *Harvard Library Bulletin* 12 (1958), 297-319.

<sup>59</sup> Libanius, Epistle 334 Förster (= 337 Wolf).

<sup>60</sup> A good portrait of the city is drawn by G. Downey, *Gaza in the Early Sixth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1963). See also F. M. Abel, "Gaza au sixième siècle d'après le rhéteur Chorikios", *R.B.* 40 (1931), 5-31.

<sup>61</sup> See for instance A. Cameron, "The Empress and the Poet: Paganism and Politics at the Court of Theodosius II", *Yale Classical Studies* 27 (1982), 217-289, esp. 280. Cf. her poem recently published by J. Green and Y. Tsafrir, "Greek Inscriptions from Hammat Gader: A Poem by the Empress Eudocia and Two Building Inscriptions", *Israel Exploration Journal* 32 (1982), 77-96.

<sup>62</sup> On Cyril and the significance of his work, see B. Flusin, *Miracle et histoire dans l'oeuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1983).

<sup>63</sup> H. Grégoire and M.A. Kugener, ed., transl., Marc le diacre, *Vie de Porphyre, évêque de Gaza* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1930).

<sup>64</sup> See G. Fowden, "Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Empire A.D. 320-435", *J.T.S.* 29 (1978), 53-78, esp. 72-73. On the identity of Julia, see G.G. Stroumsa, in *Classical Review*, n.s. 37 (1987), 95-97 (following Couilleau, n. 60 above), which corrects my previous "Gnostics and Manichaeans in Byzantine Palestine", in M. Livingstone, ed. *Studia Patristica* 10 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Press, 1985), 273-278. On religious coercion in Gaza, see R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire, (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven: Yale University, 1984), 86-89 and notes. Gaza had witnessed riots against Christians during Julian's reign; cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Disc.* 4.93 and Sozomen, *H.E.* 5.9.

<sup>65</sup> The importance of Marnas for Gazans is also referred to in the *Vita Hilarionis*, 8.5.

<sup>66</sup> The testimony is analyzed by F. Thélamon, *Paiens et chrétiens au IVe. siècle: l'apport de l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1981), 290-293.

<sup>67</sup> *Vita Constantini* III.52-53, pp. 105-107 in F. Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke, über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975). Cf. Fowden, "Bishops and Temples", 58.

<sup>68</sup> On Isaiah, see D.F. Chitty, "Abba Isaiah", *J.T.S.* n.s. 22 (1971), 47-72, esp. 66. On Barsanuphius, see Dom L. Regnault, *Maîtres spirituels au désert de Gaza: Barsanuphe, Jean et Dorothee* (Abbaye de Solesmes, 1966).

<sup>69</sup> The significance of this transformation has recently been studied anew by J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place* (Chicago: Chicago University, 1987).

<sup>70</sup> On Western Christian attitudes towards Rome, see F. Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna: Etudes sur le patriotisme romain dans l'occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions* (Bibl. Helv. Romana; Roma: Institut suisse de Rome, 1967).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. G.G. Stroumsa, "From Cyril to Sophronius: Hierosolymitan Literature from the Byzantine Period", in M. Stern, S. Safrai, Y. Tsafirir, eds. *Sefer Yerushalaim* (Jerusalem: Ben Zwi Institute, forthcoming—in Hebrew).

<sup>72</sup> Justinian's edict against Origen and Origenism was published in 543 in Jerusalem. The best discussion of this controversy is in G. Guillaumont, *Les 'kephalaia Gnostica' d'Evagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origénisme chez les Grecs et les Syriens* (Patristica Sorbonensia 5; Paris: Seuil, 1962).

<sup>73</sup> On the lauras in the Judean wilderness, see R. Rubin, "The lauras in the Judean wilderness during the Byzantine Period", *Cathedra* 23 (1982), 25-46 (in Hebrew). See also the major forthcoming study of Y. Hirschfeld, based on his doctoral dissertation at the Hebrew University, on the monasteries of the Judean wilderness in the fifth and sixth centuries.

<sup>74</sup> On the relationships between them and the monks, see Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, II, 344-354. Jerome witnesses to this fear of raids; see for instance *Quaest. in Gen.*, on Gen. 16:12, or Epistle 126.2, about a raid in Tekoa. See also Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 13-14, and *Vita Johan. Hesych.*, 13. John Moschus reports, in the name of one Gerontius of Madaba, how the Saracens had slaughtered three monks on the shores of the Dead Sea during the terrible invasion of 509; *Pratum Spirituale* 21, 124.

<sup>75</sup> For a proper use of hagiographies by the historian, see E. Patlagean, "Ancienne hagiographie byzantine et histoire sociale", *Annales E.S.C.*, 1 (1968), 106-126; reprinted in her *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance. 4ème-11ème siècles* (London: Variorum, 1981).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Stroumsa, "Gnostics and Manichaeans", *passim*.

<sup>77</sup> See for instance Ps. Nilus, *Narratio* III, P.G. 79, 612-613, on Judaizing practices among the Arabs. Cf. Eusebius, *In Psalmos* 59.10, P.G. 23, 567-570, esp. 568 B (on Jewish-Christian converts among the Mosabites and the Ammonites. Cf. further Sozomen, *H.E.* 38, P.G. 67, 1408-1413 (on Judaizing practices of Mavia).

<sup>78</sup> For another story of cure and conversion of Saracens by Euthymius, see Cyril, *Vita Euthymii*, 51 (130-131 Schwarz).

<sup>79</sup> See F. Nau, ed., *Jean Rufus, évêque de Maiouma, Plérôphories*, P.O. 8 (1911), 6. John (who died in 488) had known Isaiah and Peter the Iberian at the Maiouma *lavra*.

<sup>80</sup> On Mavia, see G. Bowesock, "Mavia, Queen of the Saracens", in *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte; Festschrift Friedrich Vittinghoff* (Kölner historische Abhandlungen 28; Cologne, 1980), 477-495, *non vidi*. Cf. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, 199ff. See also Thélamon, *Chrétientés et païens*, 123ff.

<sup>81</sup> The Christmas sermon of Sophronius, printed in an incomplete Latin version in P.G. 87.3, 3201 ff., was edited by H. Usener, *Rheinisches Museum*, n.F. 41 (1886), 500-516. A few days later, in his Epiphany sermon, Sophronius complains about massacres, the destruction of monasteries, the plundering and burning of towns and villages by the Saracens "who claim to conquer the whole world". Cf. F.M. Abel, "La prise de Jérusalem par les Arabes (638)", in *Conférences Saint Etienne*, 1910-1911 (Paris: Gabalda, 1911), 107-144. For the broader historical context of these events, see also Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, 194-198.

<sup>82</sup> On the last stages of Greek culture in Palestine, see R.P. Blake, "La littérature grecque en Palestine au VIIIe siècle", *Le Muséon*, 78 (1965), 367-380.

<sup>83</sup> Griffith has been publishing recently a series of important articles on connected topics; see for instance "Stephen of Ramla and the Christian Kerygma in Arabic in Ninth-Century Palestine", *J.E.H.* 36, (1985), 23-45.

<sup>84</sup> For a good introduction to Jewish medieval literature in Arabic, see A. Halkin, "Judaeo-Arabic Literature", in L. Finkelstein, ed. *The Jews: their Religion and Culture* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 121-154. On the theological exchange of ideas, see J. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1970). Cf. S. Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity in the Light of the Judaeo-Arabic Texts", in H. Ben-Shammai *et al.* eds., *Proceedings of the first International Conference on Judeo-Arabic* (Jerusalem: Ben Zwi, forthcoming).

<sup>85</sup> See his *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 58.

<sup>86</sup> One of the most challenging approaches is that opened by P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977).

<sup>87</sup> Ibn Baṭrīq, *Annales*, II.17. Cf. S.D. Goitein, "Al-Kuds, histoire", *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, V, 321-340, esp. 322-323.

<sup>88</sup> On the building of Muslim Jerusalem, see O. Grabar, "Al-Kuds, monuments", *E. I.*, V, 340-345, esp. 340-342. On the holiness of Jerusalem in Islam, see esp. S.D. Goitein, "The Sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine in Early Islam", in his *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 135-148. See esp. 146 on the influence of Christian monks.

## MICCAILHUITL: THE AZTEC FESTIVALS OF THE DECEASED

MICHEL GRAULICH

The Central Mexican festivals of the solar year are described in considerable detail in XVIth century sources. Some of them have even been studied by modern investigators (Paso y Troncoso 1898; Seler 1899; Margain Araujo 1945; Acosta Saignes 1950; Nowotny 1968; Broda 1970, 1971; Kirchhoff 1971). Because of the fact that the festivals have never been studied as a whole, with reference to the myths they reenacted, they have been prevented from being put in a proper perspective and new interpretations are still possible.

Until now, the rituals of the 18 *veintenas* (twenty-day "months") have always been interpreted according to their position in the solar year at the time they were first described to the Spaniards. Festivals with agricultural rites have been interpreted, for example, as sowing or harvest festivals on the sole ground that in the 16th century they more or less coincided with the corresponding seasonal events. Now, it seems clear to me that in the 16th century, the *veintenas* and their festivals had slipped away from their original place in the year. In articles published in 1976 and 1981, I have explained how the Mesoamericans did nothing to adapt their 365-day "vague" year to the tropical year, thus permitting their *veintenas*—definitely with agricultural rites—to shift a day every 4 years and more than a month every 100 years. Certain "month" names, those with a seasonal content, provide evidence in this sense. Atemoztli, "Fall of Waters", during which the gods of rain were celebrated, fell in December, i.e., in the middle of the dry season, in the 16th century. If Atemoztli is returned to the place its name suggests, the middle of the rainy season, then Atlcahualo, "Cessation of Waters", falls at the end of the wet season and Toxcatl, "Dryness", in the dry season. Ochpaniztli, "Sweeping of the Roads", designates the activity of the gentle winds which "sweep the roads which the rain travels"—at the beginning of the rainy season. Quecholli, Panquetzaliztli and Toxcatl, festivals of the solar



gods, coincide once again with the summer and winter solstices. By making the 20th of Quecholli and the 20th of Toxcatl—i.e., the actual festival days—coincide as closely as possible with the solstices, and by bearing in mind the meanings of the names of the various months, one can obtain a precise ritual calendar.

In 1519, the months were off by 209 days in relation to the tropical year and the seasons. Allowed to shift, they constituted an esoteric ritual year, the perfect image of the actual year but always ahead of it, permitting the anticipation of seasonal events with ritual. At Contact times, probably only the priests still understood correctly the situation and kept track of the days lost since the beginning of the shift in 680-684 A.D.; the common people tended to understand the festivals according to their new position and they explained them in this way to the friars. There almost necessarily must have been some contamination of the ritual year by the real one. When rains were expected, the harvest rituals were considered of little help by the farmers; therefore sacrifices to the rain deities, the Tlaloque, were added in several unrelated festivals where originally they had nothing to do.

In this article I shall present an interpretation of the festivals of Tlaxochimaco and Xocotl Huetzi as they really have to be understood, that is, according to their original position, before any shift. In order to throw light on their context, I shall first explain the structure of the year and of two of its main festivals, Tlacaxipehualiztli and in particular Ochpaniztli which is in some respects a continuation and an amplification of Xocotl Huetzi. The text is mainly a translation of two chapters of my scarcely distributed 1979 Ph.D. dissertation.

## I. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOLAR YEAR

The original ritual year had a very elaborate structure. First of all, it was equated to a day and divided into two equal parts. The nine twenty-day months of the rainy season, beginning in April with Ochpaniztli, the sowing festival, corresponded to the night, the time when the sun travels to the North, i.e. in the underworld. The nine *veintenas* of the dry season (*tonalco*) corresponded to the day

and began with Tlacaxipehualiztli, the first of a series of harvest festivals which lasted from the end of September to December.

Ochpaniztli and Tlacaxipehualiztli were two key festivals. The first one has traditionally been considered as a harvest feast but nothing in the rituals refers to harvest. On the contrary, everything indicates a beginning, a creation, impregnation and birth. Torquemada (1969: 2: 298) says that everything was swept and purified and that all the buildings were renovated. It was the beginning of the rainy season and the arrival of the Tlaloque was duly celebrated, as magnificently illustrated in Codex Borbonicus (Graulich 1976, 1980a, b, c, 1981b, 1982, 1984, 1986).

According to Sahagún (Sahagún 1956: 1: 190-6; also *Costumbres*: 48), nothing happened during the first five days of Ochpaniztli. Then there was dancing in complete silence. On the 19th day, that is, on the eve of the feast day, all fires were extinguished. This complete silence and darkness represented the universe before the (re-)creation of the world. At midnight, a forty years old woman impersonating the earth goddess Toci, "Our Grandmother", also called Teteo innan, "Gods, Their Mother", was put to death. She was supposed to get married but instead her throat was cut and she was skinned. A young and strong priest donned her skin and impersonated her henceforth.

First an aged victim, then a young and strong impersonator: obviously the ritual was meant to symbolize a rejuvenation, a recreation of the earth. Later on, the new Toci went to stand in front of the shrine of the Mexica national solar god Huitzilopochtli. She spread arms and legs, as if she were impregnated by the god—for Toci was supposed to get married. Then her son Cinteotl Itztlacoliuhqui appeared at her side as if he were born at that moment. Since he was the god of maize and also Venus as morning star, his birth corresponded to the birth of maize at the beginning of the rainy season and to the heliacal rising of Venus. In Cora belief today, the maize deity is the morning star who at Spring descends from heaven to be born on earth as maize (Preuss 1912: LXI-LXIX).

Durán (1967: 1: 146-7; 1971: 235) describes an interesting variant for the impregnation of the earth. Sacrificers went perching on top of high poles erected before Toci. Prisoners were compelled

to climb the poles and when they reached the top, they were pushed back and fell on the earth like ripe fruit. Toci would wet her finger with their blood and lick it. Then she bent forward and moaned eerily. Impregnated by the victims-fruit, the Earth gave birth to the maize god.

These rituals can be put into relationship with two myths on the origin of useful plants. According to the first one, Tlaltecuhlti, "Lady of Earth", a telluric deity identifiable with Toci, had been torn into pieces by Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl and from her body all plants were born. In the other myth, Cinteotl was born from prohibited intercourse between Xochiquetzal—another aspect to the earth deity—and the solar Piltzintecuhlti (*Historia de Mexico* 1965: 105, 108, 110). The transgression took place at the beginning of time in a paradise called Tamoanchan and it is described metaphorically as "plucking the blossoms from a tree". The tree of paradise shattered into pieces.

Other rituals of Ochpaniztli confirm the scheme: fecundation of the earth-birth of maize and plants. In the *Codex Borbonicus* (pl. 30), heroic warriors and Huastecs are figured brandishing huge phalli toward Toci. Durán (1967: 1:140) states that prisoners of war were bound to scaffolds arms and legs extended and shot with arrows in honour of the goddess of seed, Chicomecoatl. This type of sacrifice was called "marrying victims to the earth" (*Anales de Cuauhtitlan* 1938: 102). On the other hand, an impersonator of Chicomecoatl was sacrificed on a huge shock of seeds, in the presence of the rain gods (cf. also *Codex Borbonicus*: pl. 31). Thus irrigated and consecrated, these seeds were distributed to the populace in order to be sown in the first place.

It seems clear that nothing in the Ochpaniztli ceremonies refers to harvesting. On the contrary, one can hardly imagine more transparent sowing rituals. During the following feast, Teotleco, the male children of the Mother of Gods were born to the earth and the invention of fire was celebrated (Graulich 1981b).

Tlacaxipehualiztli ("Flaying of Men", in March in 1519, in October originally), half a year after Ochpaniztli, has hitherto been interpreted as a sowing festival. Doubtless, the main ritual was the so-called "gladiatorial sacrifice". An unarmed victim tied by a rope to a cylindrical stone had to fight against four well-armed war-

riors successively, two of them disguised like eagles and two other like jaguars. A fifth one representing a kind of wolf (*cueltachtli*) looked on. At the first wound the captive was put to death by heart extraction on the very gladiatorial stone.

For Seler and Preuss (1930: XIV), the ritual represented the preparation of the earth before sowing. The victim was "scorched", "furrowed" with wooden clubs edged with obsidian blades, hence the name of the ritual, *tlauauanaliztli*, "grooving, or, ploughing parallel furrows". Actually there could be no question of "ploughing furrows" to prepare the earth in Mesoamerica since ploughs were unknown. Originally, the warriors did not use obsidian-edged clubs but gauntlets imitating jaguar and eagle claws, as made clear by a drawing in Codex Nuttall (pl.83). So the victims were *scratched* and *tlauauanaliztli* simply designates the parallel grooves resulting from the clawing.

To get a better understanding of the symbolism of the gladiatorial sacrifice, it is useful to identify the myth it reenacted. According to the *Leyenda de los Soles* (1945: 123), after the sun was created the first men, the 400 Mimixcoa, refused to do their duty and to nourish their father and their mother, Sun and Earth. Five more Mimixcoa, four men and a woman, were sent from heaven in order to punish them and to feed the gods. When the battle against the 400 took place, only the men fought. As was the case in the gladiatorial rite, the fifth person, Female Wolf (Cuetlachcihuatl), just looked on. At closer examination, it appears moreover that among the four warriors there was also an eagle (*Cuauhtli*—eagle—*icohuah*) and a jaguar (*Ocelomixcoatl*). The third name refers to a hawk (Tlotepetl, "Falcon Mountain") and the fourth, Apantecuhtli ("Lord on Water"), suggests a link with the earth whose symbol was the jaguar, as opposed to the eagle representing the sky. While preparing the ambush that was to defeat the 400 Mimixcoa, the two "birds of prey" warriors hid themselves *above* the earth while the other two went *into* the earth, on the jaguar's side.

Therefore the "gladiatorial sacrifice" was the reenactment of the first battle intended to supply heaven and earth with hearts and blood, just after the creation of the sun. But there were other important ceremonies. Before the *gladiatorio*, new fire was solemnly

lighted and a victim called "Son of the Sun" was put to death (Motolinia 1970: 42). Tlacaxipehualiztli was the festival of the rising of the sun, the first holy war and also of harvesting.

The relationship with harvesting was essentially metaphorical. The captives offered to Sun and Earth in the *gladiatorio* were tied by ropes representing umbilical cords to a "hole in the earth": a perforated cylindrical stone decorated with a sun disk. This meant that they were children of the sun and the earth—like corn. Captives were often considered as *harvest* for the sun. In the gladiatorial rite, they were like corn ears on their stalks, the more so while the rope was also called "rope of maize". Once slayed they were flayed, like ears of maize whose outer leaves were taken off after harvesting. So the slaying of captives in the *gladiatorio* was (like) harvesting for Sun and Earth, the more so while it took place at the beginning of the dry season which was also the season of war and the beginning of real harvesting in the fields (Graulich 1982).

Harvesting was not done at once in Mesoamerica. The last ears were not collected until Huey Tozoztli (May in 1519, end of November originally). Sahagún (1956: 1: 150-2) explains that people went in the fields to gather ears that were worshipped as images of Chicomecoatli. They were solemnly carried to the temple and put aside for next year's sowing. Meanwhile they became the "heart of the granary". At sowing time they were brought out and became *the very ears that were distributed to the people in Ochpaniztli* (Graulich 1984).

The half year beginning with Ochpaniztli coincided with the rainy season. It began with a festival of the earth and ended with a festival of rain. Inside the series of nine months there were two celebrations of fire. Teotleco and Izcalli, the second month and the last but one. The third, sixth and ninth festivals were addressed to the Tlaloque and were intended to induce rain. This half year belonged to earth, darkness, night and to the feminine side of things. There was a festival of the sun in Quecholli-Panquetzaliztli, but it reenacted a mythical triumph of the sun at midnight in the underworld. In Tititl, 40 days before the end of the season, the rituals were aimed at hastening the arrival of the dry season and therefore at avoiding an inundation of the world. Certain ceremonies of Panquetzaliztli, Tititl and Izcalli commemorated the

mythical previous eras or “Suns” and their destruction by earthquakes, water, winds and fire. The half-year was also characterized by the acquisition of food. And, lastly, it was a period of reenactment of mythical events.

*Table I*

Rainy season	dedicated to	Dry season	
Ochpaniztli	Earth, Moon, Venus	Tlacaxipehualiztli	Sun
Teotleco	Fire, Venus	Tozoztontli	Earth
Tepeilhuitl	Water	Huey Tozoztli	Maize
Quecholli	(Earth, Moon), Venus	Toxcatl	Sun
Panquetzaliztli	Fire, Sun	Etzalcualiztli	Water, Earth
Atemoztli	Water	Tecuilhuitl	Salt
Tititl	Earth, Moon	Huey Tecuilhuitl	Maize...
Izcalli	Fire	Tlaxochimaco	Earth
Atlcahualo	Water	Xocotl Huetzi	Fire

The half-year starting with Tlacaxipehualiztli coincided with the dry season—*tonallo* in Nahuatl—during which the sun (Tonatiuh) triumphed. It began with a festival of the sun and ended with a festival of fire. *Inside* the series, Tozoztontli and Tlaxochimaco were dedicated to the earth. This half-year belonged to the sun, light, heaven and to the male side of things. During the first part of the year, the main festival of the dead, in Tititl, was a festival of deceased women; but the diurnal part ended with a great festival of the dead warriors. Since the end of this half-year was also the end of the whole year, the last two *veintenas* were both dedicated to the dead. The rituals of Huey Tecuilhuitl, forty days before the end of the dry season, were intended to quicken the arrival of rain. It was during this half-year that corn was harvested and several rites operated a redistribution of food. The aliments acquired during the previous season were now celebrated. Etzalcualiztli, Tecuilhuitl, Huey Tecuilhuitl and Tlaxochimaco in particular were dedicated to the products of the earth and to their impersonators, the four wives of Tezcatlipoca: Atlantonan or Chalchiuthlicue (water), Huixtocihuatl (salt; Chantico, pepper, was celebrated almost simultaneously), Xilonen (maize) and Xochiquetzal (flowers). The half-

year corresponded also, at least in its first part, to the present, historical age, after the fall of the Toltecs and the creation of the present sun. All the components of Aztec society were successively celebrated: the warriors in Tlacaxipehualiztli, the peasants during the two following months, the king in Toxcatl and the priests in Etzalcualiztli; then the lords and finally, in the last two months, the dead.

The rituals of the *veintenas* of the two parts of the year were often opposed or complementary. In Ochpaniztli and Tlacaxipehualiztli there was a flaying of victims, women in one month and men in the other. Ochpaniztli was a festival of the earth, women and moon and Tlacaxipehualiztli of the sun and men. Teotleco however, after Ochpaniztli, was a feast of men and warriors and Tozoztontli a feast of the earth. In Quecholli-Panquetzaliztli and Toxcatl-Etzalcualiztli, in the middle of each part and at the solstices, the main Aztec deities were celebrated: Mixcoatl and Huitzilopochtli (originally Quetzalcoatl), and Tezcatlipoca and Tlaloc. The ceremonies of Quecholli and Panquetzaliztli reenacted the myth of the sun's triumph over the powers of darkness, the moon and the stars. They were perfectly appropriated to the summer solstice, the longest day and the defeat of night. On the contrary, the winter solstice corresponds to night's triumph over the day. Therefore Toxcatl was dedicated mainly to Tezcatlipoca, lord of the night and the moon. In Tititl, Ilamatecuhtli, an old barren moon goddess was celebrated but in the parallel month of Huey Tecuilhuitl it was the young and fruitful moon, Xilonen. Izcalli was also called Xochitoca, a name that refers to the offering of flowers, like that of the parallel month, Tlaxochimaco. In Atlcahualo and Xocotl Huetzi, at the equinoxes, trees were erected, a very leafy one at the end of the rainy season and a branchless one in Xocotl Huetzi.

A year was equated to a day, but the ancient Mesoamericans' conception of the day was quite a particular one. It was believed that the sun rose in the sky until midday and then returned to the east; what was seen in the afternoon was only its reflection in a (black) mirror, and it was this reflection that disappeared in the west. The afternoon sun was thus a false one, and everything false being associated with the moon, it could be called a *lunar sun*. It was a black mirror, like the night, with solar rays; so it was halfway

between the real sun and the night, between fire and matter, it was a sun of *union of opposites*. Space and time being closely related, the three parts of the days corresponded to the three places of the dead in Afterlife. There was first the Place of the Dead, Mictlan where everybody descended at the time of his death. The deserving ones however, the brave who died heroically, did not remain in the underworld but managed to go from there to the House of the Sun, where they accompanied the sun until midday. In the afternoon, the period of the lunar sun, these warriors were transformed into many-coloured birds that frolicked amongst the flowers in a kind of paradise; they went to Tlalocan, the “place of Tlaloc on the moon”, also the abode of ordinary deserving people elected by Tlaloc, the god of earth and rain. Afternoon was also the part of the day when “heroic” women (those who died in childbirth) took over from the warriors and accompanied the sun from its zenith to the west. Being women and men (heroic warriors) at the same time, they quite logically guided a sun that was both female (lunar) and male. During the night, everybody returned to Mictlan, identified with the night; during that period, the heroic dead appeared in the form of stars. Sometimes some of them might descend on earth as frightful Tzitzimine monsters.

Those particularities of the day with the corresponding abodes of afterlife were also characteristic of the year. The rainy season corresponded to the night and to Mictlan; only in this half-year Tzitzimine appeared in ritual. The dry season was the day and its first part, the House of the Sun where harvested warriors were garnered. Quite typically, in Tlacaxipehualiztli the captives were said to become *cuauhteca*, i.e. companions of the eagle—or the sun. Toxcatl, at midday, when the black mirror replaced the true sun, was the great feast of Tezcatlipoca, the nocturnal Smoking (black) Mirror. Etzalcualiztli, in the beginning of the afternoon, corresponded to Tlalocan and was dedicated to Tlaloc. During the afternoon the sun was accompanied by heroic, divine women and such were certainly the four goddesses celebrated from Etzalcualiztli to Tlaxochimaco. It was a period of *union of opposites* that culminated, as we shall see, in the last two *veintenas* dedicated to the dead who descended on earth and to the setting sun.



## II. TLAXOCHIMACO OR MICCAILHUITONTLI

(February 17-March 8 in 682; July 23-August 13 in 1519)

*The names of the festival*

“Tlaxochimaco” means “Offering of Flowers”. The most widespread nahuatl name was Miccailhuitl, “Festival of the Deceased”, or Miccailhuitontli, “Little Festival of the Dead”. As indicated by the use of the diminutive, the *veintena* was coupled with the following one, the “Great Festival of the Dead” (Paso y Troncoso 1898: 123-5; Kubler and Gibson 1951: 27; Caso 1967: 35 and Table X; Broda 1969: 21).

The Otomi and Matlatzinca corresponding festivals were also coupled with the following ones and their names equally means “Festival of the Dead” (Soustelle 1937: 524; Caso 1967: 232).

The Quiché and the Cakchiquel names, Nabey Likinka and Ucab Likinka, are usually translated by “First [festival of] Slippery Soil” and “Second [festival of] Slippery Soil” (Brinton 1893: 299, 301; Caso 1967: Table XI; Edmonson 1965: 66). There is no explanation for those names. Kirchhoff (1971: 211) suggests a relationship with Tzotzil Nichil Kin, “Festival of Flowers”.

*The ceremonies*

According to Sahagún (1956: 1:119-20, 182-4; 1927: 156-60; 1950-69: 101-3; also Motolinia 1970: 25, 36; Tovar 1951: 27 and pl. VIII; Codex Borbonicus: 28), the Indians gathered flowers of every kind and made garlands to adorn the temples. On the eve of the feast, tamales were made and turkeys and dogs were killed for the next day’s banquets. The day of the feast, the first flowers were offered together with incense and food, first to Huitzilopochtli, next to the other gods. There was feasting and in the afternoon the warriors and the young men performed a dance “very much as the serpent goeth, as the serpent lieth” and the valiant ones danced with courtesans which they “grasped about the waist”.

According to the Codex Magliabechiano (36vo-37), it was in particular Tezcatlipoca who was adorned with flowers. Olmos (Motolinia 1970: 25, 36) and the author of the *Costumbres* (1945: 45) insist on the fact that all the gods were celebrated.

Sahagún's Tepepulco informants (Sahagún 1974: 38-40) describe how people went looking for a big tree trunk that was to be erected in the Templo Mayor's courtyard during the following month. When this tree called *xocotl*, "fruit", drew near to the city everybody went out to meet it and to offer flowers to it. The noblewomen came to "capture" it and an impersonator of the earth deity Toci-Teteo innan, "Our Grandmother—Mother of Gods"—probably the one who was to be sacrificed during the sowing and earth recreation festival of Ochpaniztli—came to welcome it. The ritual was called *xoconamicoyan*.

Doubtless, flowers were also given to the deceased. Offerings of food and drink were brought on their tombs and it was possibly in their honour that meat was eaten, as today in the cemeteries (Codex Telleriano-Remensis: pl.3. p.157; Codex Vaticanus A: pl. 63 p. 147; Torquemada 1969: 2: 298). The *Costumbres* (1945: 45) also mention sacrifices of slaves to the dead.

Durán (1967: 1: 269-70), Tovar (1951: 27) and the Codex Magliabechiano (p. 36 vo) say that the *veintena* was dedicated to the dead children and Durán and Tovar even feel that it was a *small* festival for this particular reason. It is however a well-known fact that the diminutive only indicates a minor festival with respect to the following one. The illustrations of the codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A represent a funerary bundle with a mask of Cihuacoatl-Chantico or Xochiquetzal, both earth and fertility goddesses who died in childbirth. So we may suppose that the deceased celebrated during this "small" festival of the dead were essentially the "divine" or warrior women who died "heroically", that is, in childbirth, and maybe also the children.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Analysis of the rites*

It is important to keep in mind the very position of Miccailhuitontli and Huey Miccailhuitl in the ritual year. It is the end of the dry season and of the year. A year being assimilated to a day, it was the evening and sunset. Soon the night would begin, during the five unlucky days or *nemontemi* following Huey Miccailhuitl. Soon also there would be sowing, for the rains would start and maize was to be born as soon as possible.

*The offerings of flowers*

In March, on drawing near to springtime, the first flowers appear. It was normal to offer the first ones to the gods at this moment. In 682 or in the ritual year it was in Tlaxochimaco, but even in the 16th century flowers were offered in March, as made clear by the descriptions of the rituals of the month Tozoztontli (Graulich 1984).

In the 16th century Tlaxochimaco fell on August, also a period of abundant flowers. But even in 682 or in the ritual year there were offerings of flowers during this month for it coincided with Izcalli, also named Xochitoca, "Sowing of Flowers", a festival parallel to Tlaxochimaco.

As during the preceding months, one was supposed to be in the paradise of Tlalocan-Tamoanchan: flowers were celebrated and men danced with pleasure girls. Therefore I suggest that originally the festival was mainly dedicated to Xochiquetzal, the earth goddess who gave birth to the flowers (Codex Magliabechiano: 61vo), who died in childbirth (Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas 1965: 34) and who was the patroness of the prostitutes (Torquemada 1969: 2: 299). So the last but one festival of the dry season made a pair with the second one, Tozoztontli, during which the earth goddess Coatlicue was given flowers. Furthermore, three months before, in Toxcatl, an impersonator of Tezcatlipoca had been married to four goddesses, three of which had been celebrated in Etzalcualiztli, Tecuilhuitontli and Huey Tecuilhuitl. Now it was the turn of the fourth one, Xochiquetzal.

Xochiquetzal, like Cihuacoatl or Tlazolteotl and Teteo innan, was the name of the culprit who, in the myth of paradise lost, "plucked the blossom" of a forbidden tree; in other words, she had sexual intercourse for the first time and gave birth to the god of maize Cinteotl (Graulich 1983). Obviously she was assimilated with Toci, "Our Grandmother", whose impersonator pretended to give birth to Cinteotl during the ceremonies of the sowing feast Ochpaniztli. So we are entitled to consider that it was as much her as Toci who went to welcome the *xocotl* tree.

The planting of the *xocotl* during the following month symbolized the fecundation of Earth. This is why the tree was greeted only by

women (see the illustration of Sahagún 1974). The ceremony was called *xoconamicoyan*, “where the *xocotl* is met”; *namico* is a passive form of *namiqui*, a verb that means “to go and meet someone” but whose compelling form *namictia* is translated by “to marry” and whose derived substantives *namictli* and *namique* mean “husband” or “wife” (Siméon 1885: 267).

As the last but one festival of the year Tlaxochimaco recalls not only the second feast of the dry season, but also the second festival of the year, Teotleco, “Arrival of the Gods”. In Teotleco the gods were supposed to appear on earth. Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli came first, while the merchant god Yacatecuhtli and the old fire god arrived last. Now, in Miccailhuitl, at the end of the year, the gods take leave: first Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli again, and this is why they were the first ones to receive flowers. Then, during the next month, the last ones to leave will be celebrated: Xiuhtecuhtli, the fire and year deity, and Yacatecuhtli.

#### *The small festival of the dead*

Together, Miccailhuitontli and Huey Miccailhuitl formed the main festival of the deceased. Mythically, these months corresponded to the late afternoon, when the heroic women were thought to accompany the (false) sun. They also corresponded to the Tlalocan-Tamoanchan paradise where the dead warriors went to rejoice by sucking flowers. It was the end of the day and of the year, the sun was setting. These were as many good reasons to remember the dead. Toxcatl, in the beginning of the afternoon, was a feast of the king, Etzalcualiztli of the priests, the two following *veintenas*, of the lords, now it was the deceased ancestor’s turn. During the preceding months the harvested food had been celebrated and redistributed (Graulich 1979); now all the gods and the deceased received their part.

Xochiquetzal was the first woman who “died at war”; Cihuacoatl, the Warrior Woman (Yaocihuatl), was the protectress of the women who died in childbirth: so quite understandably the funerary bundle made in Tlaxochimaco represented one or the other goddess (or both).

When a king or an important lord died, some of his wives, his

“chaplain”, his major-domo, his dwarfs and hunchbacks, some women who were to grind his corn, his cup-bearer, numerous slaves and still other victims were sacrificed to accompany him to the other world in order to serve him there. In fact, it was a whole microsmos that was put to death: for a king’s death was like a sunset, it was the end of a world, of an era (Sahagún 1950-69: 1:81-3; Durán 1967: 2:73, 393, 316, 400; Tezozomoc 1878: 457, 569-70). When a woman of quality died, victims who were to accompany her were also killed. In the years following the death, other immolations of slaves took place at regular intervals (Motolinia 1970: 130-3; Las Casas 1967: 2: 461-4; Sahagún 1950-69: 3: 48; Durán 1967: 1: 56; Tovar 1972: 226; Costumbres 1945: 58; Pomar 1964: 189; Muñoz Camargo 1892: 130; Cervantes de Salazar; 1971: 1:66). In Miccailhuítl, it probably was to honour illustrious deified ancestors that “everyone killed his slave for the god or the demon to whom he showed special devotion” (Costumbres 1945: 45).

### *The immolations of children*

The Codex Magliabechiano mentions children sacrifices in this month. The rainy season drawing near, they were obviously intended to gain the Tlaloque or rain deities’ good will.

## III. XOCOTL HUETZI OR MICCAILHUITL (March 9-23 in 682, August 14-31 in 1519)

### *The names of the festival*

“Xocotl Huetzi” mean unambiguously “Fruit Falls” and refers, first to the *xocotl*, the tree that was erected, and second to the paste effigy that was put on top of the pole.<sup>2</sup> The other name of the *veintena*, Huey Miccailhuítl, “Great Festival of the Dead”, forms a pair with the name of the preceding month. According to certain documents, among the Cakchiquel the festival was called “First Harvest of Cacao” (Caso 1967: 37 and table X, XI; Broda 1969: 21-2; Kirchhoff 1971: 211; Nicholson 1971: Table 4; Jiménez Moreno 1974: 41; Brinton 1893: 299).

*The ceremonies*

One of the commentators of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis (pl. 4 p. 159) explains that during three days, there was fasting in honour of the dead. The very day of the feast, the Indian climbed on the roofs of their houses and, turned to the North, they beseeched their deceased parents by saying: "Come quickly, for we are waiting for you". The illustration represents a funerary bundle ornated with the mask of Otontecuhli. Torquemada (1969: 2: 298) writes that during those days of mourning, "the dead kings and all those distinguished persons who died at war or in the hand of their enemies were called divine, and they made idols [i.e., funerary bundles like the one figured in the codex] for them and put them beside the gods saying that they were gone to the place of their delights and recreations in the company of the other gods".

Sahagún gives a detailed description of the rituals. As has been said before, a tree 25 fathoms long, the *xocotl*, had been brought from the mountain into the city. The branches had been cut away save the main stalks on the top. The tree was erected in the courtyard of the temple precinct and was left there during twenty days. On the 18th day of Xocotl Huetzi it was laid down. The next day it was smoothed and the top with the sprouts was put in a five fathoms long hollowed out trunk. The priests and the dignitaries decorated it with paper adornments. A dough effigy called *xocotl* and long ropes were fastened to the top. It represented a man wearing white paper ornaments; he had "wings" painted with falcons and held a shield. Three wooden sticks from which hung three tamales of amaranth seed were set up over the image.

Then the pole was solemnly erected. Captives impersonating Mimixcoa danced with their captors until sunset. The captors were arrayed so as to represent fire: their bodies were painted yellow and red and they bore butterfly devices and shields decorated with eagle legs or ocelot shanks.

The 20th day, the captives were arranged in a row before the rack where the skulls of the immolated victims were displayed. A priest took their adornments that were burned in a stone vessel. Then a person carrying a statue of Paynal, the "envoy of Huitzilopochtli", came down from the temple of the fire god

Xiuhtecuhтли, went to the captives and then back to the temple as if to show them the way. The captors grasped their prisoners by the hair and led them to the foot of the pyramid, where they were taken over by "those who cast men into the fire". These specialists threw an anaesthetizing powder on their faces, bound them and carried them on their backs to the top of the pyramid where a great fire was burning. The captives were cast into the fire and then quickly pulled out and sacrificed in the usual way. The extracted heart was thrown in the direction of the fire.

At noon, young men and adults of both sexes performed a serpent dance. At a given time the young men rushed toward the *xocotl* and tried to climb it by the ropes. The first one to reach the top took the insignia of the *xocotl* image and cast it down. Everybody tried to grasp a piece of the dough effigy. The young man who had taken the insignia of the *xocotl* image was treated as a honoured warrior who had taken a prisoner. After that, the pole was pulled down and it fell into pieces to the ground (Sahagún 1956: 1: 120-2; 184-90; 1927; 161-71; 1950-69: 2: 104-9).

In Tepepulco, the effigy represented Otontecuhтли and an impersonator of the god of merchants Yacatecuhтли was put to death. The drawing shows that the rituals took place in the presence of Toci, the very goddess who had welcomed the pole in Tlaxochimaco and who would be sacrificed at the end of the next month, Ochpanizтли (Sahagún 1974: 41-3).

The other sources mostly confirm Sahagún's informations (Motolinia 1970: 25, 33, 36; Durán 1967: 1: 119-23, 271-3; Costumbres 1945: 46-7; Codex Magliabechiano: 37vo; Tovar 1951: 27-8; Paso y Troncoso 1905-15: 4: 218-9). Variants will be mentioned in due course.

### *Analysis of the rites*

#### *The fruit falls*

##### *I. The xocotl*

The *xocotl* on top of the *xocotl* pole is described and figured in different ways in the sources. According to Tovar, it consisted of "many insignia of swords and shields and other arms". Durán

describes it as a many-coloured dough bird with warrior attributes. In the Codex Borbonicus it is a funerary bundle adorned with balls of down, a sort of paper stole and paper strips. The effigy mentioned by Sahagún was probably also a funerary bundle but provided with the mask of Otontecuhtli, the same as in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis (pl. 4 p. 159). According to the Codex Magliabechiano and the Costumbres, it was a human victim representing Otontecuhtli who had to sit on the summit of the mast and was cast to the ground.

Several pages of the divinatory part of Codex Borbonicus present interesting elements concerning *veintena* festivals. The tenth thirteen-day period seems to be directly related to Xocotl Huetzil. The deities of the *trecena* 1 Flint, the Sun and his opposite, the Lord of the Dead, are figured on both sides of a pole that is being climbed by a young man. Funerary symbols surround the scene. But at the summit of the pole the *xocotl* is replaced by a stellar eye pierced by two sacrificial thorns.

So the “fruit” could be a victim representing Otontecuhtli, or a funerary bundle, or a many-coloured bird, or a pile of arms or a star. There is a common element linking them together: the dead warrior, who usually was burned in effigy and became a star during the night and a colourful bird in the afternoon or after four years. The god Otontecuhtli was precisely a prototypical heroic warrior who had been transformed by fire and divinized: Durán (1967: 2: 153-5, 287-90) and Tezozomoc (1878: 426-8) both testify that the effigies of warriors who had died on the battlefield were adorned with attributes of Otontecuhtli and falcon wings and were called *xocotl*! So Otontecuhtli was the first one among the dead who came down to earth during this month. His name, “Lord of the Otomi”, indicates that he was the special protector of the Tepanec Otomi of Azcapotzalco, Coyoacan and Tlacopan. If the heroic fallen warrior was assimilated to him also among other people, it is probably because “Otomi” finally came to designate a fierce warrior anywhere; it had even become a title in the Aztec army.

Another of Otontecuhtli's names was Ocotecuhtli, “Lord of Pine”: in the first place because effigies of dead warriors used to be made from bundles of pine, and, second, because pine was the ordinary burning-wood. We know from the *Historia de los mex-*



icanos por sus pinturas (1945: 219) and Codex Vaticanus A (pl. 5 p. 19) that Otontecuhtli was assimilated to the old fire god Huehueteotl.<sup>3</sup>

Being the old fire god, a warrior descending from heaven and a falling fruit that fecundates the earth, the *xocotl* Otontecuhtli also corresponds to the setting sun and the evening star. He is a funerary bundle exactly like the setting sun (Codex Borbonicus: 16); like the solar Quetzalcoatl of Tollan at the end of his life, he is identical with the old fire god (Graulich 1979); in his hymn (Sahagún 1956: 4: 300), he calls himself Quetzalcoatl and Cuecuxin—i.e., the Huastec, and Huastecs symbolically stood for fecundators; and, lastly, in the Codex Tudela Otontecuhtli-Huehueteotl wears the *quetzalapanecayotl*, the big fan-like headdress made of quetzal feathers that was a typical attribute of Quetzalcoatl at the end of his (solar) life at Tollan (Anales de Cuauhtitlan 1938: 83-4) and of the descending afternoon sun (Sahagún 1927: 310).

There is more evidence for the assimilation of Otontecuhtli with the setting sun. In Mesoamerica the setting stars were generally believed to enter into Mother Earth and to impregnate her; they were like the sparks descending from the highest heaven into a woman's body at conception, but on a cosmic plane; they were also like the dead buried in the earth, who were compared to fallen fruits and their bones like stones or seeds; in Aztec, to die was "to marry the earth goddess". In the month of Toxcatl, the sun Huitzilopochtli was designated as a first-class fecundator by his impressive twenty fantoms long loincloth. Now, according to the Costumbres, the impersonator of Otontecuhtli-Huehueteotl in Xocotl Huetzi also wore a loincloth of twenty fathoms. Still in Toxcatl, an impersonator of an aspect of Huitzilopochtli, Tlacahuepan, conducted a serpent dance around young women who "embraced Huitzilopochtli". Such dances symbolized copulation. Durán (1967: 1: 121 and pll. 18, 19) says that in Xocotl Huetzi also, a god impersonator "disguised as a bird or as a bat, its wings and crest made of large and splendid feathers" conducted a dance of young men around maidens. It was a serpent dance, as made clear by the Codex Borbonicus and Sahagún's Primeros Memoriales. The impersonator of the *xocotl* described by Durán obviously played the same part as Tlacahuepan in Toxcatl. The illustration shows him

wearing the famous *quetzalapanecayotl* characteristic of the setting sun. In the Primeros Memoriales (Sahagún 1974), the leader of the dance is depicted wearing the same headdress.

An episode of Mexica "history" substantiates the suggested identification of the *xocotl*, Otontecuhtli and Tlacahuepan. During a war, a particularly valiant Mexica dignitary was taken prisoner by the Chalca. His name was Tlacahuepan and he was Montezuma I's brother. The Chalca wanted him to become their king. By way of answer, on the day of the Xocotl Huetzi feast, he told them to erect a mast twenty fathoms long so that he might adequately enjoy the honour made to him. After having asked his captive companions to dance he climbed to the top of the pole where he began to dance and to sing. Then suddenly he cast himself to the earth. The astonished Chalca killed the other prisoners by shooting them with arrows (Durán 1967: 2: 146-7; Tezozomoc 1878: 294-8).

Xocotl Huetzi was the last festival of the dry season and of the year. The stars that had risen at the beginning of the year, Venus first in Ochpaniztli and then the Pleiads in Teotleco, now came down. A year being compared to a day, it was also the end of the day or, in other words, the setting of the sun. By disappearing at the horizon the stars entered into the earth and fecundated her. During the following month the rainy season would start, there would be sowing and maize would appear: duly fecundated, Toci-Earth would give birth to Cinteotl, the maize god and the morning star.

It was the end of the year—the year, the sun, the stars were dying—and the festival of the dead who were expected to come back. The *xocotl*, the falling fruit, was the prototype of the glorious dead who had been transformed into stars or birds and who were setting or descended to earth to suck flowers during this *veintena*. It was Otontecuhtli or Ocotecuhtli and also Quetzalcoatl, Huitzilopochtli-Tlacahuepan, the fecundating Huastec and the old fire god. It was fire falling from heaven, it was the setting sun or the evening star that penetrated into the Earth goddess and copulated thus with her. All the rituals took place in Toci's sight: they foreshadowed her fecundation during the following sowing festival of Ochpaniztli. In this festival the sowing of Mother-Earth was represented in very different ways and notably by casting

prisoners from the summits of poles so that they fell like fruits (Graulich 1981b).

*The tree of the dry season and the volador*

During the whole *veintena* day and night were of equal length since the Spring equinox fell on the tenth of Xocotl Huetzi. The fact is illustrated in the Codex Borbonicus, where Sun-Day and Mictlantecuhtli (“Lord of the Place of the Dead”)-Night are figured face to face on both sides of the pole that remained erected during ten days before and after equinox. Significantly, the two deities have the same size.

During the parallel *veintena* of Atlcahualo-Cuahuitlehua (“The Tree Rises”), at the Autumn equinox, a tree had also been erected. Located in the middle and at the end of the year, these two trees somehow “supported” the year and since time and space were closely related, they also supported the heavenly vault at two particularly critical moments. The equinoxes corresponded to sunrise or sunset; the sun was linked to the earth at horizon and was about to disjoin whether to rise in heaven or to disappear in the underworld. Sun and earth being joined, Xocotl Huetzi was a time of undifferentiation, the living and the dead came together. The tree linked heaven and earth: he permitted the descent of celestial beings on earth and the rise of men towards the gods. He also permitted to avoid that the setting sun might burn the earth: the young men who captured the *xocotl* effigy deprived it from its weapons—its rays—before casting it down.<sup>4</sup>

The Atlcahualo tree was very branchy and leafy because it was a product of the rainy season. The Xocotl Huetzi tree on the contrary was branchless, it was a gigantic phallus and a tree of the dry season. It was also the mythical tree of paradise whose breaking after the original transgression—the first fecundation, the first falling of a fruit—caused the creatures to be expelled from paradise and the night to fall. As a compensation, according to myth, maize appeared, the God of Corn was born. Here in Xocotl Huetzi, people received the dough of the effigy and in the following month Cinteotl would be born again.

According to the sources on afterlife, the warriors transformed

into butterflies and birds descended on earth in the afternoon or after four years. It seems to be very likely that their descent was commemorated every four years in a very peculiar way by a variant of the *xocotl* ritual, the *volador*. This game was very widespread in pre-Hispanic times. It has been described in different parts of the country by Europeans and is figured in the Azcatitlan, Porfirio Díaz and Fernández Leal codices.<sup>5</sup>

Durán (1971: 297) describes the *volador* as follows:

“They also used to dance around a tall flying pole. Dressed as birds and sometimes as monkeys, they flew down from it, letting themselves go with ropes which had been wrapped around the top of the pole. They let themselves go little by little from a platform which stood on top. While some remained on the platform, others sat on the point of the pole on a large circular wooden rim from which the four ropes were tied to the platform. The latter went round and round while the four descended in a seated position, executing feats of daring and deftness, without becoming faint and often playing the trumpet.”

Clavijero (1964: 245) gives more specific information. He describes how the tall pruned mast was topped with a cylindrical “mortar”. From this mortar hung four short ropes supporting a square frame with a long rope at each angle. There were four *voladores* disguised as eagles, herons and other birds. They had to descend in thirteen rotations around the mast. In total there were 52 rotations, corresponding to an Indian “century” (also Torquemada 1969: 2: 305-6).

Sometimes there were six or eight *voladores*, but sometimes only two. Among the Zapotecs a similar ritual seems to have been performed with only one person (Codex Vaticanus A pl. 76 p. 173). One is reminded of Moteczuma I’s brother Tlacahuepan.

In Nahuatl-influenced Nicaragua the game was played at harvest time. On top of the pole there was an idol called “Cacaguat” (cocoa). The *voladores* were two young boys. It should be reminded that among the Cakchiquel the *veintena*’s name was “Harvest of Cocoa”. Cocoa harvesting used to take place between February and April, that is, about the Spring equinox (Oviedo 1959: 4: 413-4 and 1: 269-70). The “Cacaguat” idol was doubtless equivalent to the *xotol*—fruit—and represented also the fallen warrior, Otontecuhli. In his hymn (Sahagún 1950-69: 2: 211), this god seems to be identified both with the prickly pear and the fruit of the

cacao-tree, and both were symbols of the valiant's heart (Garibay 1964-7: 1:2; Litvak King 1951: 113-4).

The *volador* is still practised today in several places in Mesoamerica. The meanings given to the rituals correspond very well to the meaning of the *xocotl* rite.

For the Totonacs the game is a "water dance". According to legend, a man who went for water discovered a *volador* mast with flying persons in the middle of the well. The *voladores* wear sugar-loaf hats; they are identified to birds and are described as "companions on the Wind and the Sun" (Ichon 1969: 327-39).

At Xicotepec (Puebla) the *volador* was carried out again after bad harvest in order to give satisfaction to the spirits of the earth and the maize. The dancers were considered like "birds that dominate the winds or accompany them to the four cardinal points" (Larsen 1937: 180-1).

Among the Huastecs the *volador* is called "dance of the eagles". These birds are divinized dead and companions of the setting sun who bring fertility by descending to earth (Stresser-Péan 1948a; 1948b: 328-9, 333).

The Chorti ritual is carried out at the beginning and at the end of the cycle of maize. Here also the descent of the "birds" represents the arrival of the dead (Girard 1954: 325-42).

Finally among the Huichol a pole "that reaches unto heaven" is erected before the temple at the sowing festival, when raining starts. Ropes and ribbons hang from the top. Priests impersonating rain and fecundity goddesses catch them and dance while mingling and unmingling them. An old priest runs after the dancers and simulates to copulate with them (Preuss 1908: 374-5, 394).

Obviously the ritual always aims at assuring fertility and the *voladores* mostly represented the dead who came down to impregnate the earth. The similarities with the *Xocotl Huetzi* ceremony is undeniable, the more so while the *xocotl* pole is compared by Olmos (Motolinia 1970: 25) to "a mast like the flying ones". According to Sahagún, a hollowed-out trunk was fitted on the *xocotl*'s top. This apparently useless trunk corresponded to the mortar on top of the *volador* mast. After all, Tlacauepan's "historical" sacrifice was no more than a variant of the *volador* with one dancer and no rope to slow down the fall. His companions were killed with arrows; now,

in the Porfirio Díaz and Fernández Leal codices the *volador* is followed by an arrow sacrifice and during the following month of Ochpaniztli Toci-Earth was impregnated, first by throwing prisoners from the top of a pole, like fruits, and second, by shooting prisoners fastened to a wooden framework with arrows (Graulich 1981).<sup>6</sup>

The real *volador* with four dancers probably took place every four years. Since *Xocotl Huetzi* was the year's last *veintena*, the *voladores* made life to be born again and by making 4 x 13 rotations, they assured the succession of the years, the same as Xilonen in Huey Tecuilhuitl.

### *Sacrifices to the Fire god*

The stars are setting, the tree of Tamoanchan breaks, night falls, the end of the year draws on. After *Xocotl Huetzi* there are five unlucky, worthless and fearful days. They correspond possibly to the short theoretical moment of total death between the original transgression in paradise, resulting in death as punishment, and its other consequence, the birth of Cintheotl-Venus; or to the period between the end of a Sun or era and the restauration of the world (Graulich 1981b, 1983). After the five unlucky days came Ochpaniztli and at the end of this month new fire was lighted. It was however unthinkable to remain in total darkness during more than twenty days, unto the birth of the first fire and light in heaven—Venus—in Ochpaniztli. One of the functions of fire was to sustain the heavenly vault—the same as the deceased during the night—and to hold the nocturnal monsters falling from heaven at a distance (Graulich 1980). Now, since the stars were setting and there was no fire in heaven any more, and since the dead who sustained the heavenly vault had come down on earth, the sky was in danger of falling down. Its stability was to be ensured by sacrifices to the fire in order that the years might go on.

According to myth, at the end of his life the old sun Quetzalcoatl-Xiuhtecuhtli burnt himself to become the first star of the new era to come, the morning star that operated the disjunction of earth and heaven (Graulich 1979, 1988, ms.). In *Xocotl Huetzi*, Xiuhtecuhtli also regenerated himself by fire. The *Costumbres* and the *Codex*

Magliabechiano state that the *xocotl* that represented him was a human victim that was thrown into the fire after falling from the branchless tree. According to the Magliabechiano, the victim's face was covered with dough to protect it from fire and then flayed. An impersonator put the skin mask on. He probably represented the maize god and morning star Cinteotl Itztlacoliuhqui, who also used to wear a skin mask.

Other sources mention the sacrifice of Yacatecuhtli, the merchant god who was an aspect of Quetzalcoatl (Thompson 1966: 160). His immolation may also have been intended to operate the setting sun's transformation into morning star.

The western fire was also quickened by immolations of prisoners impersonating Mimixcoa. They were put to death in the same way as the warriors during the *veintena* of Teotleco. I have argued elsewhere (Graulich 1979) that this type of sacrifices by fire transformed the victims into stars and brought about the rising of the Pleiades whose duty it was to bear the heavens. Xocotl Huetzi was a prefiguration of both Ochpaniztli and Teotleco; by performing similar rites at the beginning and at the end of the year, the years were firmly bound together and the continuity of time was secured.

The merchants sacrificed also impersonators of four other gods (Durán 1967: 1: 173). Their names are not important but the fact that there were three men and a woman is rather revealing. For the bearers of the national god during the Mexica peregrinations, or the sky bearers in Codex Borgia (pl. 72) were also three men and a woman. There is little doubt that those victims were also dispatched to the Other World in order to raise the sky at the four corners of the world.

To conclude, Tlaxochimaco and Xocotl Huetzi, at the end of the dry season, the year and the day, were festivals of the dead; first the lesser ones, then the heroic warriors. It was equinox and the end of the day, the deceased came down, the sun and the heavenly bodies were setting, thus fecundating the earth for the coming season. It was a dangerous period of conjunction of heaven and earth and precautions had to be taken to avoid a collapse of the sky. The gods who had last arrived at the beginning of the year now were the last to depart. In many respects, the ceremonies

foreshadowed those of the following months, so that the years were firmly linked to one another.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Telleriano-Remensis the red and black colours of the mask are typical of fire gods and Chantico: see Codex Borbonicus pl.9, 18, 20; the white stain on the cheek may also characterize Itzpapalotl (Borbonicus: 15), Xochiquetzal (Codex Borgia: 59) and Cihuacoatl (Seler 1902-23: 3: 295). Possibly the mask is decorated with colours of fire because it belongs to a heroic woman's funerary bundle that will be burned.

<sup>2</sup> Torquemada (1969: 2: 298) explains the name by saying that in August, ripe fruits fall from the trees. Tovar (1951: 28) has the same opinion. It should however be noted, first, that it was the *ritual* that gave its name to the festival; and second, that in 682 Xocotl Huetzi was in March, a month during which many trees lose their fruit (Preuss 1912: 67).

<sup>3</sup> On Otontecuhlti, see Seler 1902-23: 3: 290-301; Carrasco Pizana 1950: 138-41.

<sup>4</sup> On rituals of pole climbing, see Eliade 1959: 164-71 and in particular Lévi-Strauss's 1964: 295-302 analysis of a South American Sherente festival quite comparable to Xocotl Huetzi.

<sup>5</sup> The game is documented among the Huastecs, Totonacs, Mixtecs, Cuicatecs, Otomis, Pipiles and Nicaraos. See Stresser-Péan 1948b; Dahlgren 1954: 245-52; León-Portilla 1972: 78-80; Codex Azcatitlan: 27.

<sup>6</sup> Graulich 1981. Krickeberg (1933: 73-5) and Preuss and Mengin (1938: 34-5) are thus mistaken in considering the *volador* as a variation of the *sacrificio gladiatorio* in Tlacaxipehualiztli. Their main evidence is that in some codices, the *gladiatorio* was also followed by arrow sacrifices.

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## SOME REFLECTIONS ON SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF MODERN HINDUISM

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Modern Hinduism provides a fascinating area of study still comparatively little researched in the sociology of religion. Several scholars have demonstrated the fruitfulness of this approach<sup>1</sup> and emphasised the need for reconsidering the methodological perspectives used for studying Hinduism.<sup>2</sup> So far, two approaches have predominated in most studies on Hinduism. First, linguistic and philosophical tools of analysis were developed by nineteenth century indologists and their successors in order to uncover the meaning of textual materials relating to Indian religious beliefs and practices. By and large, however, these texts were, and often still analysed in isolation from the society in which they originated and are handed down. Thus, it is often overlooked that the interpretation of particular texts continues to be modified in response to changing social circumstances. Secondly, by contrast, contextual studies based on the observation of Indian society and, more recently, extensive fieldwork, have been developed by sociologists and social anthropologists of the twentieth century. The latter are usually mainly concerned with Indian social structure, caste, kinship and village studies, and the relationship between traditional values and modern socio-economic development.

In a way, the sociologist of religion who wants to look at Hinduism needs something of both approaches, and yet both have their inherent limitations. Whereas indologists reconstruct a largely forgotten and idealised past far removed from contemporary Indian society, sociologists and social anthropologists are often too closely wedded to the immediate present. One frequently gains the impression that neither group pays sufficient attention to the complexity of the past-present-continuum in Hinduism as a living religious tradition. In fact, instead of seeing Hinduism as a religious system, it would perhaps be more accurate to view it as a multi-dimensional socio-religious process which has undergone some radical transfor-

mations over the last hundred years and continues to change, providing in turn a basis for the religious legitimation of large-scale social and cultural change.

The present paper does not report on findings relating to research into one particular aspect of modern Hinduism. Rather, it maps out an important territory of research in a general manner. In this way, I hope to focus attention on some issues of interest to the sociologist of religion and point to the possibility of applying sociological analysis to recent historical data provided by religions studies. In what follows I deal only with Hinduism, but the complex relationship between tradition and the continuing process of its transformation can be studied in all religions and cultures. The Dutch scholar Gerardus Van der Leeuw referred to this process as 'the dynamics of religion'<sup>3</sup> to which historians of religion have perhaps not paid sufficient attention.

Modern Hinduism, that is to say the Hinduism of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is sometimes significantly called 'Neo-Hinduism'. Many of its aspects can be understood as a new kind of religion which would not exist in its present form, were it not for the prolonged contact between the different societies and cultures of India and the West. The beginnings of this culture-contact go back as far as the late fifteenth century or even earlier, but the interaction between the different cultures was intensified during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially through the full development of colonialism. The emergence of Neo-Hinduism is closely linked to important political, economic, social and cultural changes brought about during the last 150 years. Politically and socially, modern Hinduism developed in a colonial situation; theologically, one can see its development as closely related to the contact with Christianity or what an Indian writer has aptly characterized as 'The Shadow of the Cross', a title which refers to the modern encounter of 'Christianity and Hinduism in a colonial situation.'<sup>4</sup>

The development of India in the modern period provides an excellent case-study for one of the earliest examples of interaction between western and non-western societies where a wide range of responses to the incoming colonial culture can be particularly well observed. Similarly, modern Hinduism provides an equally early

example of a non-western religious tradition coming into contact with the West and undergoing deep transformation as a consequence of this cross-cultural encounter. Responses to new ideas, behaviour and institutions varied widely over space and time, and between different individuals; among others, they include patterns of acculturation, rejection, and revivalism. On the other hand, due to the particular links between the West and India, knowledge about Indian religions was diffused relatively early and affected intellectual developments in Europe from the eighteenth century onwards, particularly in literature, philosophy, and the arts. In addition, Hinduism was also one of the earliest faiths to be transplanted to the West by missionary means at the end of the nineteenth century, a process which continues to this day.

Because the culture-contact situation occurred sooner, Hinduism underwent profound changes earlier than most other non-western religions. Its dynamic development, whether viewed hermeneutically as the reinterpretation of the traditional religious heritage, or sociologically as modernization, provides a helpful paradigm for understanding the pattern of development occurring in traditional religions of non-western cultures during the modern period.

It is therefore all the more extraordinary that the complex process involved in the development of modern Hinduism has, up to now, received little analysis within a wider social and cultural context. Max Weber's pioneering study *The Religion of India* presents an analysis of ancient and medieval India rather than of the India of his own days or of the late nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Weber depended for his sources mainly on the works of German and British indologists of his time, dealing with the past rather than the present. With them he shares the achievement of having put forward a particular interpretation of ancient and medieval Indian religion and society linked to a scholarly reconstructed past of which many factual details have since been either modified or proved to be false.<sup>6</sup>

I would like to examine certain developments in modern Hinduism which can be related to theoretical issues debated in the sociology of religion. It is my contention that the developments of modern Hinduism cannot be satisfactorily explained without a sociological analysis of the factors involved in the contact between

Indian and Western culture. The importance of this culture-contact situation can be demonstrated at several levels. I shall mainly discuss approaches pertaining to 1. the conceptual and linguistic level; 2. the doctrinal and scriptural level; and 3. the institutional and societal level. All three levels were affected by the close interaction between Indian and western society, especially Britain.

*1. Approach at the conceptual and linguistic level*

Werner Cohn<sup>7</sup> has argued that social scientists as well as many history of religion scholars often apply the concept 'religion' in non-western contexts without clarifying and sufficiently separating the different meanings subsumed under this concept. 'Religion' is often used as an observer's construct. As such it is applied to sets of activities which the actors themselves may not necessarily term religious, nor may they necessarily combine distinctly separate activities into a coherent unity in the way the observer does. This can give rise to much confusion by leading to the wrong assumptions in cross-cultural comparisons and by creating the impression of greater similarity and universality of religious phenomena than is warranted by the actual data.

This difficulty is particularly apparent in the study of Hinduism. The latter is often presented in a one-dimensional manner, giving the impression of an overall unity and coherence which this religious tradition never possessed. The various historical strands which went into the making of Hinduism include a great diversity of beliefs, rituals, and institutions which, strictly speaking, are often not comparable to those found elsewhere. The concept 'Hinduism' itself is such a wide umbrella-term as to be heuristically almost useless for analysis. 'Hinduism' is primarily not a religious concept, but one of geographical origin. Derived from Sanskrit, a variant of the term 'Hindu' was used by ancient Persians, Greeks and Arabs to describe a way of life characteristic of the people of Sind or the Indus valley. The term 'Hinduism', adopted by the English in the early nineteenth century, was traditionally not used by Indians to describe their religious beliefs and practices but, through the influence of western usage, it has come to be widely accepted today, even in India. In the critical assessment of a late



nineteenth century Indian writer 'There is no Hindu conception answering to the term "Hinduism", and the question... what is Hinduism, can only be answered by defining what it is that the foreigners who use the word mean by the term'.<sup>8</sup> It is only recently that Western scholars have begun to analyse the multiple ramifications of the term "Hinduism".<sup>9</sup>

There is also no Indian word which corresponds exactly to the western concept 'religion'. The closest equivalent would be the term *dharma* which cannot be precisely translated by one English word but indicates a cosmic, moral, social and individual order as well as normative prescriptions of duty. Nowadays, Hindus also describe their way of life as *sanatana dharma*, an 'eternal order'. However, as a description of 'Hinduism' this term came into usage only through late nineteenth century apologetic connotations associated with other religious terms of western origin such as 'spirituality', 'mysticism', 'scripture' or 'theism', all of which are widely used in Indian writings in English.<sup>10</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, western scholars first applied the term 'sect' to various Hindu communities which differ from each other by traditions and scriptures of their own and are usually called *sampradaya*. Strictly speaking, however, there is no Indian reality corresponding to the term 'sect' in the sense of a heterodox community, as there is no reality corresponding to the notion of a 'church' as a centralized institution defining orthodoxy. *Sampradaya* literally means 'what is handed over', that is to say 'tradition', and in that sense implies orthodoxy; the term is sometimes also used as equivalent for 'religion' in modern Indian languages, for example 'Hindu-sampradaya'. What constitutes a Hindu *sampradaya* is not the fact of being rejected by a central authoritative institution but rather being a tradition founded by a particular sage or saint, a guru. Joahim Wach<sup>11</sup> was the first to point out that the nature of Hindu *sampradaya* poses a problem for the sociology of religion, but its role and operation in Indian society provides an important channel for introducing effective social change.<sup>12</sup>

These few examples make it apparent that the study of Hinduism can highlight some of the problems encountered in the definitional debates about religion as well as the discussions about the typology

of religious institutions. This would also be true of other areas of central interest to the sociology of religion as for example the question of the religious location and transmission of religious authority in society. Before being applied, conceptual terms of western origin need to be closely examined in order to clarify whether or not they are suitable for the sociological analysis of Hinduism.

Another fruitful area of investigation is the examination of the historical transfer of words and concepts from one society to another. The culture-contact situation between India and England is well documented at the linguistic level by the presence of Indian words in the English language, and that of far more numerous English words in Indian languages. A historical-descriptive survey of *Indian Words in English*<sup>13</sup> shows that in the period before the nineteenth century, due to the particular kind of contact between the two societies, Indian words introduced into English mainly relate to commercial, military, and political terms, that is to say primarily to material culture. In the nineteenth century, however, the religions, languages, literatures and, above all, the philosophies of India, began to attract the attention of English scholars. Consequently, linguistic terms relating to philology, philosophy, and particular aspects of religious belief were introduced into English at that time.

A thematic rather than merely chronological analysis of the words introduced shows that the religious terms relate to a mixture of words of both Hindu and Muslim origin, due to the contiguous presence of Hinduism and Islam in Northern India. Words relating to Indian religious figures were the first to become known in the West, beginning with 'brahmin' at the end of the fifteenth century, followed in the seventeenth century by such terms as 'pir', 'fakir', 'guru', 'sannyasi', 'yogi', 'pundit', and 'Hindu'. The four basic *varnas* or castes were also known relatively early: after the term 'brahmin' at the top of the hierarchy had been introduced in the late fifteenth century, the other end of the theoretical *varna*-scheme, the 'shudra', become known 150 years later, in the seventeenth century, when the term 'pariah' too is first found in English. The 'kshatrya' and the 'vaishya', the two other castes in the middle of the four-fold *varna*-scheme, became only known in the eighteenth century.

Terms such as 'yoga' (1820), 'vedanta' (1823), 'maya' (1823), 'karma' (1828), 'nirvana' (1836), 'dharma' (1862), 'atman' (1870), and 'bhakti' (1877) were all introduced during the nineteenth century, and a variety of meanings came to be associated with them. The widespread diffusion of such words as 'karma', 'maya', 'nirvana' and 'yoga' for example, was particularly due to the writings of the theosophical movement, founded in 1875.

The term 'Buddhism' is found from 1801 onwards, whereas the term 'Hinduism' was introduced into English in 1829. But the two major religious movements of Hinduism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism, became only known in 1871 and 1878 respectively. Max Müller was the first to translate the term 'darshan' quite mistakenly as 'philosophy'. 'Darshan' refers to different Hindu worldviews, traditionally said to be six in number; the concept does not exactly correspond to the critical position associated with the development of philosophy in the West, particularly during the modern period.<sup>14</sup>

The diffusion of knowledge about Hinduism in the West through the introduction of linguistic terms and philosophical concepts relating to Indian religious figures, institutions and beliefs provides a worthwhile field for the sociology of knowledge for it relates to the development of western awareness about religion in non-western cultures. The fact that the majority of western works on Hinduism have mainly dealt with philosophy, spirituality or mysticism rather than with ethics, epistemology, logic or other aspects of Indian religious thought and practice has so far escaped sociological attention. Closely related to this is the historical time sequence in which Indian religious writings became known in the West, either merely by their proper names, or as texts in translation.<sup>15</sup> The earliest texts referred to in seventeenth century English were the 'shastras' (1616-19), a descriptive term relating to scholarly treatises and commentaries. In the late seventeenth century, the term 'purana' (1696) referring generally to medieval Hindu writings was also introduced in the West. Terms such as 'Vedas' (1734) and 'Rg Veda' (1776) became known in the eighteenth century, but the Sanskrit texts and translations of these writings were only made available to the West in the late nineteenth century through the work of western orientalists. The earliest religious text known in English translation was the *Bhagavad-Gita*, translated directly from

Sanskrit (rather than from Persian translations, as was the case with other writings) before any other religious text in 1785 at the request and with the financial support of the East India Company. It is not a canonical text like the corpus of vedic literature but enjoys a quasi-canonical status in the Vedanta system and for Vaishnava worshippers. In the last hundred years, it has acquired an extraordinary authority beyond sectarian divisions for reasons we shall discuss shortly. The position and importance of this text, even in India today, were greatly enhanced by the fact that since its first translation western people compared it to the Christian *New Testament*. Subsequently, Indian religious reformers gave the *Bhagavad-Gita* a central place in their reinterpretation of Hindu doctrines, necessitated by important social and cultural changes. This brings us to the problem of the doctrinal reinterpretation or modernization of Hinduism which is particularly evident from the treatment given to scriptures and the new understanding of such traditional key concepts as *karma* and *dharma*.

## *2. Approach at the doctrinal and scriptural level*

Modern presentations of Hinduism by Hindus themselves have been deeply affected by a process of reinterpretation which began in the nineteenth century and is often described as 'Hindu renaissance'. The precise meaning and exact temporal onset of this process has given rise to much scholarly debate. The 'Hindu renaissance' does not refer to religion alone but is closely linked to the general transformation of Indian society and culture during the nineteenth century. The composite nature of this renaissance has been characterized as historical rediscovery of an Aryan golden age, linguistic and literary modernisation, and socio-religious reformation.<sup>16</sup> The historical rediscovery of the Indian past in terms of an Aryan golden age was brought about by the work of western orientalists which revealed important features of vedic religion and culture that had hitherto been obscured or forgotten. The linguistic and literary modernisation was made necessary and possible through the introduction of the printing press, first used on a larger scale in the late eighteenth century, especially by the Serampore missionaries, soon followed by Indian entrepreneurs in Calcutta

and elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Improved modes of communication, whether they were the use of printing, the development of indigenous journalism, or later the introduction of rail and postal facilities, are an important feature of Indian modernity in general, and consequently of the modernization of Hinduism. They enabled religious thinkers and reformers for the first time to address themselves not only to a small group of disciples as in the traditional *sampradaya*, but to a wider public. However restricted such a public may have been, it extended far beyond traditional boundaries and even included people overseas in some cases.<sup>18</sup>

Sociologists have stressed the central role of the Protestant Reformation for the modern development of religion in the West. The Protestant Reformation also provided some Hindus with a model for possible religious reform as much of Protestant missionary preaching contrasted the benefits of the Reformation with the disadvantages of the preceding dark ages of medieval Europe. The preaching of the missionaries, coupled with a strong critique of Indian religious practices, supplied an important incentive to reform Hindu thought and culture. In the past, Indian religious reformers had always primarily been concerned with the search for liberation or *moksha*; the social consequences of their teaching occurred mainly as unintended by-products. By contrast, Hindu reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consciously planned and willed the reform of Indian society and religion as an end in itself. Hindu writers of this period did not so much describe what Hinduism is but, influenced by a western model of religion, they prescribed what Hinduism ought to be. In the analysis of modern Hinduism one has to ask, therefore, first, what aspects of the traditional religious heritage were reinterpreted in a new social and historical situation; and secondly, which western influences provided the tools for such a reinterpretation of Hinduism in the specific culture-contact situation of colonialism.

Whereas Hindu religious practices were traditionally local, regional, sectarian, and exclusive, rather than unitary and universal, the search of the reformers concentrated on the unifying elements of the tradition which could be universalised and applied to people all over India, as well as related to religion outside it. Similar to Christianity, but contrary to Indian tradition, unifying

aspects of religious belief rather than divisive religious practices were stressed whilst sectarian practices, temple ritual and image worship were de-emphasized.<sup>19</sup>

The best test-case in the reform debate is provided by the new understanding of caste. Traditionally a social and religious phenomenon so closely intertwined as to be inseparable, caste was declared by all modern Hindu reformers to be a feature of the Indian social system which had intrinsically nothing to do with Hindu religion and spirituality. The modern reformers largely reached only the urban middle classes. But even in the cities groups of orthodox Hindus reacted sharply to the reformers' attack on the religious tradition. Whilst the reformers stress that caste is *not* a religious phenomenon, traditional Hindu groups continue to insist on the religious importance of caste in all areas of life. Analogous to Christianity, the scriptural basis of religion was now emphasised in a new way even though 'scripture' had never played the same role as in the Christian tradition. Hinduism is not primarily linked to the written word but to *shruti* and *smṛti*, to words heard and remembered by sages of old, handed down orally and esoterically over millenia from the guru to the specially initiated disciple, belonging to the upper castes of the 'twice-born'. Thus, the function of these texts in traditional Indian society was not identical with what is understood by 'scriptures' today.

As against the polytheistic practices of popular Hinduism, the reformers consciously set out to prove the presence of monotheism in India. The 'unity of the Godhead' was emphasized as an integral part of the Hindu tradition, but support for it was initially not sought in the teachings of Ramanuja and other theistic exponents of traditional Hinduism. On the contrary, evidence for the existence of a Hindu belief in monotheism was first of all drawn from certain passages in the Upanishads and later also from verses in the *Bhagavad-Gita* which lend themselves to a monotheistic interpretation. However, it seems to have been Charles Wilkins who first referred to 'the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, in opposition to idolatrous sacrifices, and the worship of images' in the 1784 preface to the first translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.<sup>20</sup> Early Indian reformers approached the matter differently by taking the view that the 'unity of the Godhead' was primarily proved by the

Upanishads. Both doctrinal reinterpretation and institutional reform can be seen in terms of three major strands developing from the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century, showing in various ways and degrees the combination of Indian and western influences:

1. The importance of the Upanishads was emphasised first as providing a traditional scriptural basis for monotheism in Hinduism. Institutionally, the new understanding of theism culminated in the foundation of the *Brahmo Samaj*, a Hindu society of the believers in one God which, in the words of a later commentator, would not have been but for the presence of Christianity in India.

2. A second strand of scriptural and doctrinal reinterpretation is closely related to the four main collections of the Vedas. Institutionally, this culminated in the vedic fundamentalism of the *Arya Samaj* which displayed a puritanical zeal in purging Hinduism from all post-vedic accretions.<sup>21</sup> The *Arya Samaj* was mainly active in the Punjab and in western India, whereas the *Brahmo Samaj* primarily belonged to Bengal. Both societies developed organisational structures and, in the case of the *Brahmo Samaj*, patterns of worship on the model provided in the Protestant churches. Analogously to Christian teaching, the *Brahmo Samaj* emphatically preached 'the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man'. Both the *Brahmo Samaj* and the *Arya Samaj*, although of basically quite different orientation, were consciously founded to become comprehensive 'Hindu churches'. It was their aim to embrace and religiously unify the whole of India. This aim was not achieved; each movement developed along sectarian patterns.<sup>22</sup>

3. The third strand of reinterpretation is closely linked to the *Bhagavad-Gita* which provided a scriptural legitimisation for social action and a much needed work-ethic. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when Hindus had developed a new identity and self-consciousness vis-à-vis the West, a growing differentiation occurred between the religious and secular aspects of society. In fact, the polarity between spirituality and politics became itself one of the most important themes of the religious reformers. Religiously, the idea of social service as a means of serving God became institutionalised as one of the integral aims of the

Ramakrishna Order, founded by Vivekananda in 1897, after a prolonged stay in the West. In the secular realm, the idea of social action and work provided a strong impetus for the development of nationalism and the movement for political independence. The *Bhagavad-Gita* played an important role in both; it came to be read in a new way as both a religious treatise and a national tract which emphasized action more than renunciation and taught social justice and service to others as religious duty.

Because of this two-fold importance of the *Bhagavad-Gita* for the development of a religious and secular work-ethic, some comment is called for. The first *Bhagavad-Gita* commentary in modern times was written in 1886 by the well-known Bengali novelist, journalist and early nationalist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94). He was probably also the first to comment explicitly on the interdependence and ambivalence of the religious and secular in Hinduism.<sup>23</sup> He early criticised European writers for their failure to understand Hinduism as a living religion and culture. With a strong interest in the social sciences and a close connection with the Bengal Social Science Association, founded in 1867 on the model of the British Social Science Association, he must be credited for having introduced positivist thought in Bengal. Many of Bankim's ideas were of great influence on other reformers, particularly Tagore, Vivekananda and Aurobindo. But as Bankim wrote mostly in Bengali rather than in English, and also did not institutionalise his ideas through the creation of a *samaj* or mission, his thought is less well known abroad than that of other Hindu reformers.

In his search for new approaches to Hinduism on an indigenous basis, he was particularly influential in his revolutionary reinterpretation of the key concept of *dharma* or duty. He extended the idea of religious duty by universalising the meaning of *dharma*. Traditionally *dharma* is linked to a code of conduct defining the obligations of the individual to his family, caste and immediate community; now it became related to society at large, to one's whole country, and ultimately to the entire world. Thus, *dharma* came to include social and political duties; it presented patriotism as a religious duty and, under certain conditions, even sanctioned social and political revolution. In this way, Bankim not only reinterpreted traditional Hinduism, but he formulated an entirely new *dharma* or



ethic for the modern Hindu, thereby providing a dynamic concept for the development of religious and political nationalism.<sup>24</sup> Besides the concept of *dharmā*. Bankim also reinterpreted the symbol of the mother-goddess who protects India as the motherland which becomes divine in turn, an important development which cannot be discussed here, but which provided another powerful symbol for Hindu nationalism.<sup>25</sup>

Bankim was also the first to introduce the modern reinterpretation of the Krishna-figure. Under the influence of Christian theological writings, Bankim tried to prove the historicity of Krishna, however unsuccessfully. Like Christ, Krishna is both God and man, and he also embodies the ideal of human perfection. However, Krishna surpasses other religious teachers as he does not only propound religious teachings, but puts before us a living ideal of action whose comprehensiveness is unparalleled by any other religious figure.

What Bankim begun anew is now an integral part of the modern neo-Hindu tradition. For all subsequent reformers and religious thinkers a commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* has become *de rigueur*, whether one looks at Vivekananda, Tilak, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, or the leader of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.<sup>26</sup>

The Krishna figure of the *Bhagavad-Gita* has become the personal God *par excellence*. A major part of his message consists in stressing the path of *karma-yoga*, the way of selfless action and work for others, performed in a spirit of inner renunciation by not seeking any reward or fruits of one's action. Krishna, the ideal human being and the ideal God, is also the ideal worker, the *karma-yogin*. Vivekananda used the new symbol of *karma-yogin* to make Hinduism active, work-oriented, and even 'aggressive', to use his own words. Aurobindo used the same symbol as illustration and title for his extremist political journal which called for independence. Today, Gandhi has come to represent for many Hindus the permanent embodiment of the *karma-yogin* ideal of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.<sup>27</sup>

This reinterpretation of *karma* implies considerable conceptual contradictions, however. Traditionally, *karma* means ritual action and, by extension, action in general and even more the accumulated good or bad consequences which result from any

action. As every action always produces new *karma* which, in a cyclical view of life, predetermines future reincarnations, the traditional way to liberation from this cycle has always implied renunciation from all action, including ritual action. Thus the highest and safest way to liberation, which socially remained an esoteric way by being restricted to the upper castes, has always been the way of *jnana*, that is to say, of realization, knowledge and wisdom. The way of devotion or *bhakti*, linked to a theistic faith, and the way of *karma* as the way of works and ritual, have been the way of the masses and were considered less likely to produce the desired result of liberation. In the modern interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* *karma* is given the added meaning of work in a secular sense, of physical labour and social service to others, so that work is interpreted as worship to God.

Strictly speaking, the Krishna of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is not involved in action (except if one relates him to the wider setting of the epic of which the Gita is a part), but performs the traditional role of a teacher instructing the warrior Arjuna on the battle-field about the duty required from him in a situation of war. Even iconographically it can be shown that this understanding of the *karma-yogin*, the charioteer Krishna, is relatively recent. Its pictorial representation does not form an integral part of the traditional scenes of Krishna's life, so richly documented throughout Indian sculpture and painting. On the contrary, Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield is a modern motif, found from the late eighteenth century in Indian miniatures and, with greater frequency, in contemporary popular bazaar art, particularly in the form of calendar pictures and modern book illustrations of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The frequent pictorial representation of scenes from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, particularly of Krishna and Arjuna on the chariot, within the image world of modern Hinduism is only one example indicating a shift of interest in the understanding of traditional themes and their artistic expression.<sup>28</sup>

If one analyses the social locations of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in modern Hinduism, it becomes apparent that the reinterpretation of this text and its use for the scriptural legitimation of social and religious innovations must be seen as the outcome of a cross-cultural process which developed through the contacts between India and the West.

The major historical phases and personalities which contributed to a new universal understanding of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in India and the West have been examined in Eric Sharpe's study *The Universal Gita* (1985).<sup>29</sup> The new interpretations of the *Gita* have by now become so orthodox and quasi-canonical that they are not only used by religious preachers, but also by secular innovators who want to convince their countrymen of the desirability of large-scale industrialisation. As an example a documentary film on 'Four Men of India', produced by the Hindustan Lever group, may be mentioned wherein new jobs in industry are illustrated whilst the commentary repeatedly quotes a verse from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, stressing that 'for the wise man knowledge and action are one' (BG V,2). In other words, the traditional religious goal of liberation can be realised through the way of work or action, whereas in the past it was mainly sought through knowledge and complete renunciation from the world and its activities. The comprehensive message of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which includes the understanding of renunciation in terms of disinterested action rather than total abandonment of action, provides religious support and reinforcement for a new social situation in modern India. It is therefore not surprising that this idea of disinterested action, as preached by the *Bhagavad-Gita*, is central to contemporary discussions on Hindu ethics, as it represents a traditional value which can greatly help and legitimise the modern development of Indian society.

### *3. Approach at the institutional and societal level*

Another area of possible research concerns the cultural interaction apparent in the transplantation of Hinduism to the West. The term 'transplantation' implies the transfer of Hinduism to another culture-area and its missionary propagation as a new faith in a pluralistic society as one religion among others.<sup>30</sup> Traditionally, Hinduism has always been ethnically rooted, particularly through its caste-structure into which an individual must be born to qualify as a Hindu. This social-structure element is far more important than any doctrinal or faith-element requiring personal assent or conversion. Unlike Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity or Islam, Hinduism was not found outside the country of its origin until very

recently. It was only during the nineteenth century that Hinduism, for the first time in its history, became a proselytising religion, a change made possible through the reinterpretation and universalization of its message.

The reform movement of the *Arya Samaj* was the first to develop a dynamic missionary activity, but this remained primarily directed at non-Hindu Indians, that is to say, it attempted to win previous Indian converts to Islam and Christianity back to Hinduism and bring outcaste Hindus into mainstream Hinduism. This movement was relatively unsuccessful, however.<sup>31</sup>

A more universal conception of a worldwide Hindu mission was subsequently developed by the reformer Vivekananda whose preaching exercised considerable influence in India and abroad. During his three years' stay in the West (1893-6) Vivekananda came to reinterpret the traditional understanding of Vedanta in a new, if not to say revolutionary, way. He reconceived it in terms of both a universal as well as eminently practical religion, a 'practical Vedanta' directed to work and social service. In addition, he considered India to have a special mission to preach spirituality to the world. But this was a newly developed understanding of spirituality; it emerged only during the latter part of the nineteenth century in response to certain needs of Indian society defending itself against western dominance.<sup>32</sup> However, even the arguments used in this defence would not have taken the actual form they did without important contributions from the West.

The historical and linguistic researches of western orientalists had helped to discover a common past for nineteenth century Indians; the socio-political reforms of Indians and Westerners established a common present. Both developments were important in creating, beyond the deep-rooted diversities of Indian society, a common consciousness of a racial and cultural as well as a religious, and later political, unity of India. Hindu apologetic, frequently carried out in the English language, first developed as a defence against the incisive criticisms made by western missionaries and civil servants. With growing self-consciousness it grew into a wider justification of Hinduism and its values vis-à-vis the West. By the end of the nineteenth century, Hinduism had become sufficiently reformed and strengthened to affirm its own superiority against the

dominantly material values of the West. In practice, the claim to superior spirituality was first endorsed not in India, but in the West, by gaining western converts to the teachings, if not the social structure, of a new religious message which appeared more attractive than any religion of their own cultural background.

What are some of the factors which help to explain the transplantation of Hinduism to the West? Historically, this transplantation was initiated by two movements, one of Indian, the other of western origin. Vivekananda himself, and later the Ramakrishna Mission founded by him (1897), established the first centres of Hindu teaching, preaching and worship in the U.S.A, England, and elsewhere. The other influential movement in propagating Hindu religious beliefs and practices in the West was the Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875. A movement of western origin, it became indianised after its founders, Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, had moved to India in 1879. Its primarily Hindu orientation was further enhanced after its best-known western convert, Mrs. Annie Besant, began to preach 'a new and reformed Hinduism'<sup>33</sup> to both Indian and western audiences. The Ramakrishna Mission as well as the Theosophical Society grew out of the novel, selective blending of Hindu and western ideas. In a sense, both were new religious movements which initiated the key developments in transplanting Hinduism as a religion to the West. Both movements were pioneered by particular individuals who possessed qualities of charismatic leadership. They found a following among Indians as well as westerners, often belonging to a social elite. Both movements interacted and sometimes successively influenced the same individuals.

The wider socio-political context in which Hinduism came to the West requires closer investigation. Strictly speaking, Hinduism in its indigenous setting, as practised by Hindu social groups, had been transplanted to non-Indian societies before, especially with the large numbers of indentured Indian labourers which the British colonial administration had transported around the globe. However, these groups remained in relative isolation from the host-society so that little adaptation took place in the understanding and practice of Hinduism. Such adaptation, however, was required when Hinduism came into close contact with western societies, both in India and abroad.

Generally, it is not sufficiently stressed that the deep transformations involved in the development of modern Hinduism and its transplantation to the West took place in a colonial situation where India was ruled by an alien political power with a different cultural and religious heritage. In this situation, Hinduism was the religion of a subject people and Christianity the religion of foreign conquerors who nonetheless brought considerable material and social benefits to India. The presence of Christianity in India posed a threat to traditional Hinduism, but it also provided a stimulating challenge for the revitalisation and transformation of the indigenous religious heritage. Some of the themes which emerged out of this situation of confrontation and dependence imply the opposition between the indigenous and alien, the ancient and the new, the sectarian and the universal.

The colonial situation is equally important for understanding the western interest in Hinduism. Over the last hundred years or so, a considerable number of western intellectuals have expressed the hope that a moral and spiritual renewal of the West may be brought about by influences from the East. This interest in the East and especially in Indian religions is usually seen in merely spiritual and religious terms, but it has rarely been examined in a wider social and historical context. Taking into account the material preoccupations involved in the socio-cultural relations between East and West, Alex Aronson has said about the western interest in Indian spirituality that

The coincidence of spiritual and material expansion is far too striking to be merely accidental... Historically speaking, the re-awakened interest in Indian civilization coincided with the economic and colonial expansions of those countries in Europe which required new materials for the products of their factories and workshops...

The country, therefore, in which the Industrial Revolution first originated, accelerating thereby the rise of the middle classes, was also the first to investigate the civilization of India... The middle classes stood for expansion of empire as well as for the expansion of their mind...

India was to the rising middle classes of Europe, apart from being one of the main sources of their economic prosperity, an escape from their own spiritual narrowness, a protest against the limitation of a purely classical culture, the romantic dream of a timeless and conflictless existence come true.<sup>34</sup>

The interest of western individuals in Hinduism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was motivated by a disillusion-

sionment with Christianity, but also by a general discontent with western life, with the growth of industrialisation and new political forces.

The number of western people who became followers of or even converts to Hinduism has always been relatively small. Up to the 1950's they mostly belonged to an intellectual and literary elite and, due to their social position, their influence was often greater than one would suspect from their number. During the 1920's, quite a few western intellectuals were attracted by the ideas of neo-Vedanta, described as 'perhaps the first missionary movement of any Eastern religion to the West'. In 1930, an American author even referred to the 'Vedanta's invasion of America' and listed ten Vedanta centres of the Ramakrishna Movement in the U.S.A. besides seventeen other Hindu and Yoga societies.<sup>35</sup>

Since then, the number of Hindu organisations and centres of worship in the West has grown exponentially. What was once an elite interest has now become a much more broadly based phenomenon. Such Hindu institutions as the ashram and the guru-figure are widely known today and so are certain religious practices such as the use of mantras, initiation, and puja. But so far, little work has been done to show how the transfer of these institutions and rituals from one society to another subtly transforms their meaning, function and practice.<sup>36</sup>

This redefinition of the traditional beliefs and practices of Hinduism within a new social context does not only occur among western converts; it is equally observable among the immigrant Hindu communities in the West. Religious practices which were originally rooted in the diverse sectarian and regional traditions of village Hinduism have to be adapted and unified in order to provide small Hindu groups in large urban centres of the West with group cohesion and identity.<sup>37</sup> Even in India, loosely-structured Hindu devotional groups in urban areas often acquire a heightened sense of religious distinctiveness which cuts across the traditional lines of social division and leads to a new interest in organisation and intellectual expression. In Britain researchers have often concentrated their attention more on examining the role of ethnicity and community than on asking what specific function Hindu religious beliefs and practices have in maintaining the identity and

boundaries of Hindu immigrant groups. How far are these beliefs and practices being adapted and changed? How far is their transmission from one generation to the next secured outside formal channels? Or how far are new organisational structures created to guard and propagate a newly defined Hindu 'orthodoxy'.<sup>38</sup> There is the further question of how far are the cultural, social and religious aspects of Hinduism increasingly being more clearly distinguished and separated in a new cultural environment. There is also the question of how far contemporary western converts to Hinduism, especially those belonging to the Hare Krishna movement and modern Hindu meditation groups, help to emphasize selective aspects of Hindu spirituality and through this selective emphasis influence and subtly modify the perception and self-description of Hinduism by Indian immigrants to Britain.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the process of transplantation has not only a historical but also a contemporary dimension wherein the self-understanding of Hindus in the West is influenced and partly reoriented by what western converts understand the essentials of Hinduism to be.

As far as the historical onset of this transplantation to the West is concerned, the most important area for further analysis is the colonial situation itself with its highly complex political, economic, cultural, religious and social factors and its implicit dominance-dependence relationship. In what sense this was of decisive importance in shaping Hindu apologetics, modern Indian self-understanding, and the dynamics of Hinduism today, still awaits further elucidation.

### *Conclusion*

These are some examples of possible sociological approaches to the study of modern Hinduism. It should be clear by now that the term 'Hinduism', like the term 'religion' itself, is primarily a societal rather than a sociological or theological category. To understand Hinduism today, both the historical and contemporary manifestations of socio-religious change in India as well as their relation to developments in western societies require detailed investigation. However, many studies lack the necessary rigour to explain satisfactorily the various factors involved in the reinter-



pretation and modernization of Hinduism. Thus, they cannot convincingly show where points of a creative breakthrough have occurred in modern Hinduism in recent times.

Much research on Hinduism remains at a merely descriptive level and offers little to explain the dynamics of change or the fact of the persistence of Hinduism in spite of profound social changes. In much writing on Hinduism the units of analysis are often insufficiently demarcated in terms of either time-span or subject matter. In order to understand how modern Hinduism arrived at its contemporary self-descriptions and how it operates under new social conditions, one needs to examine the conceptual tools and principles of selection operative in the ongoing re-interpretation and modernization of Hinduism. Here, the term 'reinterpretation' is meant to refer to a new understanding of the conceptual, doctrinal and scriptural aspects of Hinduism whereas 'modernization' is seen to relate to institutional and social innovations and changes.<sup>40</sup> Both terms cannot be applied, however, without reference to cross-cultural processes relating to the interaction between India and the West.<sup>41</sup> It is necessary to break down the complexity of historical and social developments into their component dimensions so as to make possible more meaningful empirical and theoretical research. One can say about the study of modern Hinduism what has first been said about Indian sociology in general, namely, that what is required is not merely an elucidation of what is now known, but also an explanation of what may be known wrongly.<sup>42</sup>

The development of modern Hinduism can also be related to important theoretical issues in the sociology of religion. One example concerns the possible future evolution of religion in terms of a progressive differentiation of what is considered to be 'religious' in modern society and the selective emphasis on what are the most essential elements of a religious tradition today. Here the question arises of how far contemporary religions are moving away from their traditional cultural roots in the community by addressing themselves with a special 'message' more directly to the individual. Thus, religion comes to be seen as distinct, although not unrelated, from its cultural and institutional matrix, by emphasizing in a new way aspects of inwardness, of spirituality and mysticism which may elucidate a universal response. This is a new orientation which

dates from relatively recently; it is closely connected with a new concern for selfhood and personality, history and community which can greatly differ from traditional religious worldviews.<sup>43</sup> Cross-cultural influences are now affecting the development of all religious traditions in the contemporary world. Besides large-scale changes one must also consider the cumulative effect of more widely available information regarding the rise and development of religions within a comparative and global perspective. The systematic study and analysis of humanity's religious heritage as well as the growing encounter between people of different religious background may have repercussions on the development of religious awareness and practice which are difficult to foresee at present.

Some sociologists have discussed the future of religion in terms of the two poles of sectarianism and ecumenism. These terms themselves may be too culture-bound, however, and too much shaped by the past history of religion in the West. To suggest a more open-ended model, one might pursue the comparative analysis of religious traditions in terms of the tension between a growing differentiation, i.e. a search for particularity and separate identity, and an equally growing universalisation of those elements in each tradition which can be correlated with similar elements in other traditions. Historically, this process first began in the culture-contact situation experienced by Hinduism, but it now affects all religious traditions. However, the development of modern Hinduism provides a particularly illuminating paradigm showing the transformation of ancient religious beliefs and practices under new social, political, and economic conditions. A detailed cross-cultural analysis of this ongoing transformation can furnish the sociology of religion with ample data for further conceptual and theoretical refinement, and it is to be hoped that an increasing number of scholars will turn their attention to studying the complex socio-religious processes which characterise the historical emergence and contemporary dynamic of modern Hinduism.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Anti-religiöse Bewegungen im modernen Südindien. Eine religionssoziologische Untersuchung zur Säkularisierungsfrage*, Bonn: Röhrscheid Verlag, 1971; idem, *Der politische Hinduismus*. Indische Denker zwischen religiöser Reform und politischem Erwachen, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1981, or the analysis of modern Hinduism in R.J.Z. Werblowsky, *Beyond Tradition and Modernity*. Changing Religions in a Changing World, London: Athlone Press, 1976; see especially his chp. V 'Affirmation through Renunciation: *Dharma*, *Moksha* and *Nirvana*'. See also the essays in K. Ballhatchet and D. Taylor, eds., *Changing South Asia: Religion and Society*. Papers presented to the Seventh European Conference on Modern Asian Studies, Hong Kong: Asian Research Service, 1984. The ideas of this paper were first developed in a sociology of religion seminar at the London School of Economics and later published in *Social Action* (New Delhi), vol. 32, 1982: pp. 427-448. They are presented here in a revised version.

<sup>2</sup> The Ninth European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, held from 9-12 July 1986 at the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University, devoted a whole panel to 'Hinduism Reconsidered', but the methodological papers were mainly concerned with definitional issues of the term 'Hinduism' rather than with wider sociological perspectives. This is also true of Arvind Sharma's article 'What is Hinduism? A Sociological Approach', *Social Compass* XXXIII/2-3, 1986: pp. 177-182. I shall consider the issue of definition, but also a number of other issues.

<sup>3</sup> See G. Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1964 (second edition): pp. 609-25.

<sup>4</sup> S.K. Das, *The Shadow of the Cross*. Christianity and Hinduism in a Colonial Situation, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> This was shown in detail in Trevor Ling's Inaugural Lecture 'Max Weber in India', *The University of Leeds Review* 16/1, 1973: pp. 42-65. For further treatment of this topic see his book *Karl Marx and Religion in Europe and India*, London: Macmillan, 1980, especially chp. 6, 'Weber and Indian Religion'.

<sup>6</sup> The literature on Weber's treatment of Indian religion is too vast to be listed here. For recent discussions see Ling, op. cit. and David Gellner 'Max Weber, Capitalism and the Religion of India', *Sociology* 16/4, 1982: pp. 526-541. See also D. Kantowsky, 'Max Weber on India, and Indian interpretations of Weber' in K. Ballhatchet and D. Taylor, op. cit. pp. 11-35 (see note 1 above).

<sup>7</sup> W. Cohn, 'On the Problem of Religion in Non-Western Cultures', *International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion*, vol. 5, 1969: pp. 7-19.

<sup>8</sup> Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in J.Ch. Bagal, ed., *Bankim Rachanawali*, Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1969, p. 231. For recent Indian discussions see the special issue of *Seminar* 313, September 1985, on 'The Hindus and their isms'.

<sup>9</sup> See note 2 above. Papers concerned with definitional issues given to the panel 'Hinduism Reconsidered' included one of that title by R. Burghart, R. Frykenberg 'The Emergence of Modern "Hinduism" as Seen in the Light of changing Historical Knowledge: A Reappraisal of Concepts with Special Reference to South India', David Shulman 'Reconsidering Hinduism, or: What I might have said (in part) if...', G.D. Sontheimer 'Hinduism: The five components and their interaction' and H. von Stietencron 'Hinduism: on the proper use of a deceitful term'.

<sup>10</sup> A separate analysis would be required to show in detail why the connotations of these terms are embedded in different social, historical and linguistic traditions in the West and in India. F. Staal has provided a brief, lucid statement on 'The

Concept of Scripture in the Indian Tradition' in M. Juergensmeyer and N.G. Barrier, eds., *Sikh Studies*, Berkely: The Graduate Theological Union, 1979: pp. 121-4.

<sup>11</sup> J. Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967, pp. 127-130: 'The "Sampradaya" of Hinduism'.

<sup>12</sup> See A. Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change: The Role of Sects in Hinduism', International Workshop Seminar on 'Religion and Development in Asian Societies', December 1973, Kandy/Sri Lanka. Different channels of social and religious dissent and their transformative effect on Indian society are discussed in S.N. Eisenstadt, R. Kahane and D. Shulman, eds., *Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy and Dissent in India*, Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984. Religion and Society Series No. 23.

<sup>13</sup> G. Subha Rao, *Indian Words in English*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

<sup>14</sup> This is briefly discussed in A. Bharati, *A Functional Analysis of Indian Thought and its Social Margins*, Varanasi: Vidya Vilas Press, 1964, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> I am dealing here especially with the contact between India and England. Further work would be required to show how much knowledge about India was earlier transmitted to Europe, particularly by the Jesuits, through Latin and Portuguese writings. But their works would have been mainly accessible to a small ecclesiastical elite rather than to a wider western public.

<sup>16</sup> See D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*. The Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773-1835, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

<sup>17</sup> It is well known that the Jesuits used a printing press earlier in Goa, and there is also evidence of some printing activity in South India. But these activities remain isolated examples which did not affect Indian society at large whereas the introduction of printing presses on a large scale from the late eighteenth century onwards brought with it a revolution in the diffusion of secular and religious knowledge. For a detailed description of this process see A.K. Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India*, Bombay: Marathi Samshodhan Mandala, 1958; see also the impressive evidence gathered in G.W. Shaw, *Printing in Calcutta to Eighteen Hundred*. A Description and Checklist, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. See also B.S. Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India*. A Story of Cultural Re-awakening. Vol. I, South Indian Origins of Printing and its Efflorescence in Bengal. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1985.

<sup>18</sup> See D. Killingley, 'Vedanta and Modernity' in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright, eds., *Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1976, pp. 127-140.

<sup>19</sup> See B.S. Cohn, *India: The Social Anthropology of a Civilization*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1971, especially ch. IX on 'Urbanization, Education, and Social and Cultural Change'. See also Hal W. French and Arvind Sharma, *Religious Ferment in Modern India*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.

<sup>20</sup> Ch. Wilkins, *The Bhagvat-Geeta* (1785), New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1972, p. 24. An early reference to the Gita is found in a Portuguese letter of 1560; see G. Gispert-Sauch, 'Notes for a History of the Bhagavad Gita', *Indica* 42, 1985: pp. 17-27.

<sup>21</sup> The importance of the *Arya Samaj* for the development of modern Hindu consciousness is extensively analysed in K.W. Jones, *Arya Dharm*. Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. For a detailed study of the founder of the Arya Samaj, including an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources, see J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*. His Life and Ideas, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

<sup>22</sup> See G.S. Bhatt, 'Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and the Church-Sect Typology', *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 10, 1968, pp. 23-32.

<sup>23</sup> For a fuller discussion of Bankim's understanding of Hinduism, especially as developed in his unfinished *Letters on Hinduism*, see U. King, 'True and Perfect Religion: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Reinterpretation of Hinduism', *Religion*, vol. 7, 1977, pp. 127-148.

<sup>24</sup> For the understanding of *dharma* in the ancient, medieval and modern period see the symposium edited by W. Doniger O'Flaherty and J. Duncan M. Derrett, *The Concept of Duty in South Asia*, Delhi: Vikas, 1978.

<sup>25</sup> See E.J. Sharpe, 'Avatāra and Śakti: Traditional Symbols in the Hindu Renaissance' in H. Bizais, ed., *New Religions*, Stockholm: Alquist and Wilksell, 1975, pp. 55-69.

<sup>26</sup> See Robert N. Minor, ed., *Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavadgita*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986 for interpretations provided by theosophy, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Tilak, Sri Auribondo, Gandhi, Vinoba, Swami Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, Swami Sivananda, and Swami Bhaktivedanta. A thought-provoking analysis is found in A. Bharati, 'Ghandi's Interpretation of the Gita—An Anthropological Analysis', in S. Ray, ed., *Gandhi, India and the World*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1970, pp. 57-80. For earlier commentaries see Arvind Sharma, *The Hindu Gītā. Ancient and Classical Interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā*, London: Duckworth, 1986.

<sup>27</sup> See U. King, 'Der Karmayogin als Symbol eines neuen Lebensverständnisses im modern Hinduismus' in G. Stephenson, ed. *Leben und Tod im Lichte religiöser Symbolik*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980: pp. 301-316. Second edition Darmstadt 1985. Also 'Adapting to a Colonial Economy: The Ideal Karmayogin as a Symbol of Hindu Revival' in W. Fernandes, ed., *Inequality, its Bases and Search of Solutions*. Dr. Alfred de Souza Memorial Essays. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1986: pp. 229-247.

<sup>28</sup> I have discussed this at length in 'Iconographic Reflections on the Religious and Secular Importance of the Bhagavad-Gita within the Image World of Modern Hinduism', *The Journal of Studies in the Bhagavadgita* V-VII (1985-1987): pp. 161-188. See also U. King 'The iconography of the Bhagavad Gita. The visual theology of a Hindu scripture', *Journal of Dharma* VII/2, 1982: pp. 146-163.

<sup>29</sup> E.J. Sharpe, *The Universal Gita*. Western Images of the Bhagavad Gita. A Bicentenary Survey. London: Duckworth, 1985. See also G.J. Larson, 'The Bhagavad-Gita as Cross Cultural Process: Toward an Analysis of the Social Locations of a Religious Text', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XLIII, 1975: pp. 651-68. The variety and complexity of Gita translations is amply documented by W.M. Callewaert and Shilanand Hemraj, *Bhagavadgītānūvāda*. A Study in Transcultural Translation, Ranchi: Satya Bharati Publications, 1983.

<sup>30</sup> The theoretical implications of the process of transplantation are discussed in M. Pye, 'The Transplantation of Religions', *Numen*, vol. XVI, 1969: pp. 234-9.

<sup>31</sup> See U. Sharma, 'Status Striving and Striving to Abolish Status. The Arya Samaj and the Low Castes', *Social Action*, vol. 26, 1976: pp. 214-36.

<sup>32</sup> For a closer examination of this new understanding of Indian spirituality see U. King, *Indian Spirituality, Western Materialism*. An Image and its Function in the Reinterpretation of Modern Hinduism, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute 1985, Ideas for Social Action Series, Monograph No. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant as Woman and Leader*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962, p. 220.

<sup>34</sup> A. Aronson, *Europe looks at India. A Study in Cultural Relations*, Bombay: Hind Kitab, 1946, pp. 7, 8 and 9.

<sup>35</sup> W. Thomas, *Hinduism invades America*, New York: The Beacon Press, 1930, pp. 16 and 21; for a directory of Hindu organizations, see pp. 287-9.

<sup>36</sup> The difficulties of transferring Hindu institutions to a different social structure are discussed by P.L. Brent, *Godmen of India*, London: Allen Lane, 1972, especially ch. 5 'The Godmen's Meaning'; see also A.K. Saran, 'Religion and Society. The Hindu View', *International Year-Book for the Sociology of Religion*, vol. V. Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969, pp. 41-67.

<sup>37</sup> See the essays in R. Burghart, ed., *Hinduism in Great Britain*, London: Tavistock, 1987, and in D.G. Bowen, ed., *Hinduism in England*, Bradford: Bradford College, 1981. Also K. Knott, 'Hinduism in England: The Hindu Population in Leeds', *Religious Research Papers* No. 4, Department of Sociology, The University of Leeds, 1981.

<sup>38</sup> The maintenance of traditional religious beliefs and practices, their transmission and reinterpretation is of central concern to the 'Community Religions Project' undertaken by the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Leeds/England. This Project encourages research into the different religious and ethnic communities of the West Yorkshire region. See K. Knott, *Hinduism in Leeds: A study of religious practice in the Indian Hindu community and in Hindu-related groups*. Monograph Series, Community Religions Project, University of Leeds, 1986; S. Barton, *The Bengali Muslims of Bradford: A study of their observance of Islam with special reference to the function of the mosque and the work of the Imam*. Monograph Series, Community Religions Project, University of Leeds, 1986; and D. Bowen, *The Sathya Sai Baba Community in Bradford: Its origin and development, religious beliefs and practices*, Leeds, 1988.

<sup>39</sup> Some of these aspects are discussed in K. Knott, *My Sweet Lord*. The Hare Krishna Movement, Wellingborough/Northhamptonshire 1986.

<sup>40</sup> I differ from A. Bharati here who applies the term 'modernization' to all aspects of Hinduism, whether doctrinal, social or operational; see A. Bharati, 'Hinduism and Modernization' in R.F. Spencer, ed., *Religion and Change in Contemporary Asia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971, pp. 67-104.

<sup>41</sup> This interaction between India and the West is well brought out in T.N. Madan's article 'The quest for Hinduism', *International Social Science Journal*, vol. XXXIX/2, 1977: pp. 261-78. But on the whole the article does not go beyond a discussion of well-known historical facts and their sociological interpretation. It does not take sufficiently into account what one might call the specifically religious elements of Hinduism which are becoming increasingly important through being universalised. It also overlooks the intrinsic strength and resources of Hindu faith and spirituality. Madan makes only passing reference to the confidence of this faith which he brands as 'naivety', but is he not as or more naive when he states in the same sentence that 'modern science, as a philosophy and as a technology, is fundamentally opposed to all religions'? See op. cit., p. 275.

<sup>42</sup> See the preface to R. Mukherjee, 'Trends in Indian Sociology', *Current Sociology*, vol. 25, 1977.

<sup>43</sup> See the chapter on 'Religious Evolution' in R.N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief*. Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World, New York: Harper and Row, 1970, pp. 20-50. An examination of these new concerns in Hinduism is found in M.M. Thomas, 'Modernisation of Traditional Societies and the Struggle for New Cultural Ethos', *International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion*, vol. VI, Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1970, pp. 45-64.

## THEOLOGY OF NOSTALGIA: REFLECTIONS ON THE THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ELIADE'S WORK

CARL OLSON

The history of religions is a discipline that Mircea Eliade, probably its best known international practitioner, understands in a very broad sense. It is not only concerned with the interpretation of symbols, myths and various forms of religious behavior, but also represents the occasion for philosophical reflection. According to Eliade, a hidden agenda of his conception of the history of religions is that it embodies a theology. This paper examines what Eliade claims is a camouflaged theology within his work.

In his journal entry of November 8, 1959, a note referring to his work *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Eliade makes his commitment plain:

I wonder if the secret message of the book has been understood, the "theology" implied in the history of religions as I decipher and interpret it. And yet the meaning emerges rather clearly: myths and religions, in all their variety, are the result of the vacuum left in the world by the retreat of God, his transformation into *deus otiosus*, and his disappearance from the religious scene.<sup>1</sup>

In another journal entry later the same year on December 5, Eliade cites the need to isolate and identify "*the presence of the transcendent in human experience.*"<sup>2</sup> From a methodological perspective, these might seem to be remarkable admissions for an acknowledged historian of religions or someone involved in *Religionswissenschaft* (science of religions). Some would argue that theology is an illegitimate task for an historian of religions, who is supposed to be concerned with an unprejudiced, empathical, objective comprehension of various kinds of religious phenomena. On the other hand, David Tracy calls attention to Eliade's work as an achievement that "paradoxically serves a prophetic religious role to challenge the dominant prophetic, ethical, historical trajectory of Western religion in favor of its grounds in the power of manifestations."<sup>3</sup>

We will not be overly concerned with the legitimacy of such an

implied theology for a historian of religions. Rather we will concentrate on elucidating Eliade's implied theology by proceeding along the following path: his comprehension of the human situation; understanding of God; what he calls cosmic Christianity; and the nostalgia for paradise. This paper does not claim that Eliade is a systematic theologian or a theological poet like Kierkegaard, a spy for the eternal. Eliade's works are, however, full of theological reflections and implications which do bear some relation to each other. We will argue that the key to understanding Eliade's theological reflections is the essential role that nostalgia plays in the ruminations.

### *Human situation*

In a manner reminiscent of Tillich's method of correlation, Eliade takes religion to be the solution to every existential crisis in life because it offers exemplary, transcendental patterns.<sup>4</sup> The transcendent patterns act as a magnet drawing individuals out of their crucial, personal situations, and challenges them to overcome their contingent and particular condition and to adhere to the universal patterns: "The religious solution lays the foundation for an exemplary behavior, and, in consequence, compels the man to reveal himself as both the real and the universal."<sup>5</sup> Religion is a reply to the fundamental question concerning the meaning of existence.<sup>6</sup> Since modern beings are involved in religious crises that involves an awakening to an awareness of the absence of meaning, we must determine more fully the human situation as conceived by Eliade.

Eliade does not treat the basic human condition as characterized by sin because it is not a topic that interests him, a point he acknowledged in response to a question about original sin in a seminar of Norman O. Brown.<sup>7</sup> Eliade prefers to discuss the human situation in terms of fallenness. The concept of fall is used by Eliade in three basic ways but not necessarily in the Judaeo-Christian sense of the concept. The initial sense of the fallenness of the human condition represents a fall from paradise, a loss of primordial perfection and a disaster. Eliade equates the fall from paradise with the rise of religion:



Religion is indeed the result of "the fall," "the forgetting," the loss of the state of primordial perfection. In paradise, Adam knew nothing of religious experience, nor of theology, that is, the doctrine of God. Before "sin," there was no religion.<sup>8</sup>

Human beings feel torn apart and separated from perfection and that which is powerful and utterly different than themselves. Thus the human condition after the fall from paradise is characterized by dissatisfaction, forgetfulness of a timeless, paradisaical condition, and separation from that which is utterly holy. This separation represents a fissure within human beings and the world.<sup>9</sup> Thus this initial fall involves an ontological change within beings and in the structure of the world. From a mysterious unity, human beings have fallen into disunity. Within their condition of dissatisfaction, separation, forgetfulness, ontological fissure and disaster, human beings are nostalgic for their lost paradise, a paradoxical state in which contraries exist in unity.

The second sense of fall corresponds to the death of God as proclaimed by Nietzsche in the nineteenth century. This prophetic proclamation means that modern beings have lost the possibility of experiencing the sacred at the conscious level.<sup>10</sup> The religious affection is driven into the unconscious level of existence. In his journal, Eliade reports reading Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters from Prison* with approval. Bonhoeffer desperately searched for religion in everything natural, profane and rational, whereas Eliade locates religious significance in the unconscious which alone remains religious.<sup>11</sup>

Another sense in which Eliade uses fall is to refer to the fall into history or time. The fall into history reflects the awareness by modern human beings of their conditioning and victimization by the brute forces of history.<sup>12</sup> From another perspective, the fall of beings into time commences with the secularization of work: "It is only in modern societies that man feels himself to be the prisoner of his daily work, in which he can never escape from Time."<sup>13</sup> Thus it is history that creates obstacles for modern beings on the path to salvation, an existential problem that is expressed as the terror of history. The drama of history is devoid of enduring meaning and value because modern beings know only profane time and not the time sanctified by the incarnation of Christ.<sup>14</sup> As beings suffer

without grasping the meaningfulness of their pain, history comes into focus as an absurd, cruel, authentic hell that provokes human despair. The only adequate response to the terror of history is faith, the highest form of freedom, because it can defend being from the rapacious character of historical forces and enable beings to grasp sacred time or time made meaningful by the Incarnation.<sup>15</sup>

Eliade deepens the tension within the terror of history by making a distinction and implied comparison between profane, non-religious beings and *homo religiosus* of archaic traditions. The profane being assumes a new existential situation by regarding oneself as the subject and agent solely of history and refusing transcendence, whereas *homo religiosus* seeks to live in close proximity to the sacred. By accepting no paradigmatic models beyond humanity, a profane being makes oneself and desacralizes both oneself and the world. Such a person leads a tragic existence:

The sacred is the prime obstacle to his freedom. He will become himself only when he is totally demysticized. He will not be truly free until he has killed the last god.<sup>16</sup>

As a product of the desacralization of human existence and the world, the profane being forgets that one is still a product of religion, something that *homo religiosus* never forgets. By trying to empty oneself of all religion, the profane being loses all transhuman meaning.<sup>17</sup> Although the profane person opposes *homo religiosus*, such an individual remains an inheritor of religion because one remains a product of the past and cannot abolish history.

Not all profane beings are completely irreligious. They do not lose their religious inheritance and they continue to cling to pseudo-religions and degenerate mythologies and rituals. There are, for instance, the festivities connected with the New Year celebration, the revelry of a marriage or the birth of a child, the pseudo religion of Marxism, the private mythologies of dreams and fantasies, the escape from time provided by reading and the nostalgia for paradise exemplified by nudism. The cinema often utilizes the mythical battle motif of a struggle between a paradigmatic hero and monster like the Star Wars and Indiana Jones variety. In contrast to such profane beings, *homo religiosus* of archaic traditions live on a twofold plane: "It takes its course as human existence and, at the

same time, shares in a transhuman life, that of the cosmos or the gods.”<sup>18</sup> Living in an open cosmos and open to the world, *homo religiosus* is accessible to cosmic experience. This means that *homo religiosus* is in active communication with divine being and shares in the sanctity of the world.<sup>19</sup> *Homo religiosus* is comfortable in the cosmos because such a person lives at the center of the world: “To attain to the center of the World means, therefore, to arrive at the “point of departure” of the cosmos at the “beginning of Time”; in short, to have abolished Time.”<sup>20</sup> By periodically abolishing time through the repetition of cosmogonic acts, *homo religiosus* defends oneself against time, devalues time, manifests an anti-historical attitude, does not accept oneself as only an historical being and lives in a constant present.<sup>21</sup> *Homo religiosus* lives at the juncture of the *axis mundi*, the meeting point of heaven, earth and hell. By being at the center of the world, *homo religiosus* is near to heaven, can move from one cosmic region to another, can communicate with the divine beings, and lives in the sacred or zone of absolute reality.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to profane beings, life for *homo religiosus* is meaningful. Eliade’s understanding of *homo religiosus* betrays a nostalgic attitude towards archaic religious beings. In fact, Kenneth Hamilton accuses Eliade of a theological bias precisely because he appeals to archaic and Oriental cultures in order to demonstrate the poverty of modern religious experience.<sup>23</sup>

The human condition of the profane person is best expressed, according to Eliade, as a series of initiation trials or ordeals, that is, of deaths and rebirths.<sup>24</sup> From one perspective, initiation trials represent a search for a center, a repository of the sacred. Since the path to the center is guarded by demonic beings or defended by labyrinths, it is a dangerous journey.<sup>25</sup> The search for the center and the prototype for modern beings, for Eliade, is Ulysses:

His journey was a journey toward the center, searching for Ithaca—which is to say, searching for himself. He was a good navigator, but fate—in other words, the ordeals of initiation he had to go through—forced him again and again to defer to his return home. I think the myth of Ulysses is very important for us all. We shall all of us turn out to be a little like Ulysses, seeking for ourselves, hoping to reach the end of our journey, and then, when we reach our home and homeland once again, no doubt discovering our selves. But, as with the labyrinth, as with every quest, there is a danger that we may lose ourselves. If one does succeed in emerging from the labyrinth, in finding one’s way back home, then one becomes another being.<sup>26</sup>

How do we reach our homeland? In a sense, we are already there because the homeland, for every exile, is language.<sup>27</sup> Since there is no tension nor contradiction between the world and homeland, the center is where one finds oneself in language. "As long as you are in that center, you are at home, you are truly in the real *self* and at the center of the cosmos."<sup>28</sup> This road home to our center is arduous and fraught with dangerous perils. In his autobiography, Eliade refers to his own personal experience:

The last events in Bhawanipore now seemed to me like a long wandering in a labyrinth. I felt that I should not be able to get out of that labyrinth until I should have returned to the "center." I must at all costs "concentrate" myself, regain my true center.<sup>29</sup>

The profane, illusory, and phenomenal existence of modern individuals can be transformed into a new, real, enduring form of life, from profane to sacred, from religious death to life.

Although the road to the center or home is arduous, the rite of passage that symbolizes the journey of life ends on a hopeful note for Eliade, who is confident in the creative power of the mind. This creative power enables one to remain free in any circumstance.<sup>30</sup> To be cognizant of one's freedom means to be a creative spirit, unleashed from the crush of industrial society, morally regenerated, existentially reborn and hopeful.

### *Deus otiosus*

That a man who holds opinions like these should be regarded by some, Altizer is a good example,<sup>31</sup> as an atheistic theologian or a death of god theologian seems preposterous, yet such has been Eliade's fate at the hands of some of his colleagues. When they correctly see that Eliade has an implied theology, how can they misread him so badly? The interpretations are so patently extreme that, with Ricketts<sup>32</sup> but drawing upon subsequent material as well, one simply cannot resist an extreme response. Not only are such attitudes far from products of new insights but they represent a stance toward the sacred which Eliade has treated and refused as simply another version of the *deus otiosus*, the remote, withdrawn deity.

It is necessary to look at what Eliade says rather than at what one might attribute to him for as little reason as deconstructionists often offer. He enumerates three basic characteristics of the *deus otiosus*: (1) God withdraws to the sky after creating the world and human beings; (2) this withdrawal is sometimes accompanied by a disruptive break in communication between one cosmic region and another; (3) since the withdrawn deity is forgotten by humans, its place is taken by various divinities closer to human beings.<sup>33</sup> Having lost religious actuality and significance, the withdrawn deity plays no part in the cults and myths of the religious culture.<sup>34</sup> God's remoteness and non-actuality are equivalent to his death. Nevertheless, this withdrawal of God from contact with the world and its inhabitants inaugurates true religion because the vacuum created by God's withdrawal is filled by other divine beings.<sup>35</sup>

The divine withdrawal and remoteness expresses historically the increasing interest that humans take in their own religious, cultural and economic discoveries. The discovery of agriculture, for instance, transforms human economy and attitudes towards the earth and its fertile, life-giving powers by *homo religiosus*. "Religious experience becomes more concrete, that is, more intimately connected with life."<sup>36</sup> This implies that *homo religiosus* in turn withdraws from the remote, transcendent deity and is more concerned with the concrete aspects of religion. Although the withdrawn deity disappears and is essentially forgotten, its memory survives and is camouflaged in myths and symbols. Sky symbolism manifests, for instance, the sacred divinity in height, ascension and center symbolism.<sup>37</sup>

By reviewing the characteristics of the *deus otiosus*, it is evident that the death of God is not a recent phenomenon acknowledged only in the works of philosophers and theologians nor is it some type of radical innovation. Death of God pronouncements are surely an unconscious revival of the *deus otiosus* known in the history of religions, an excellent example of the process of desacralization, the final camouflaging of the sacred and its complete identification with the profane. The death of God theology is a drastically secularized version of the myth of the *deus otiosus*.<sup>38</sup>

As stated earlier, Eliade was placed within the death of God group by Altizer, an identification that Eliade rejects explicitly in

his works. In his journal on May 13, 1966, Eliade acknowledges reading Altizer's book entitled *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, but tells us that the book did not initially take hold of him for some unknown reason.<sup>39</sup> Not until almost a year later does Eliade provide an answer in his journal with an entry on April 4, 1967:

Have I already noted these lines from Heidegger's *Holzwege* (p. 186) that Tom Altizer should meditate on? In any case I'm recopying them here: "Hier stirbt das Absolute. Gott ist tot. Das sagt alles andere, nur nicht: es gibt keinem Gott." (This is where the Absolute meets death. God is dead. And this means everything except "there is no God!")<sup>40</sup>

This implies that Eliade cannot accept the death of God and its radical implications for human existence. If God is dead, according to the deconstructionist theology of Taylor, the self is absent, history is ended, scripture is closed and life is meaningless.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, Eliade cannot accept these implications because human existence implies the search for meaning and meaninglessness is anti-human.<sup>42</sup>

Eliade is not, however, a theologian or philosopher in the traditional sense. Unlike Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes and Kant who tried to prove the existence of God, Eliade's attitude does not suggest that he favors a philosophical proof. Eliade refers to the definition of God given by Saint Sylvester, that is, God is like an onion because He is good and makes you cry. According to Eliade, this is a good illustration of negative theology: that nothing can be affirmed of God. Since God is indefinable, we can say anything whatever about Him, even that He is like an onion.<sup>43</sup> Proofs are naive and dangerous because one might falsely imagine that one knows a specific item about God. It is far better to leave everything in suspension and to be content with personal certitudes.<sup>44</sup> Why should we leave talk about God in this condition? Eliade seems to suggest that if we could clearly define God we would lose the mystery.

Although Eliade is opposed to the classical arguments for God's existence, he does prefer a way of referring to God, who can be defined as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the co-existence of contraries. An archaic formula for wholeness and the conjoining of male and female sexuality is expressed, for instance, by androgyny, a symbol of perfection, autonomy, strength, and union of opposites. Another

example is, of course, Jesus Christ, the God-man and most perfect hierophany. The *coincidentia oppositorum* formula is the best way to understand God because it lucidly demonstrates that God can only be grasped as a paradox that is beyond rational comprehension and ultimately represents a mystery.<sup>45</sup> Since the *coincidentia oppositorum* defies rational comprehension and leaves only a mystery, the union of opposites is a symbolic way of referring to God. And this symbolic expression often becomes a nostalgic wish by human beings to recover a lost unity or a nostalgia for a lost paradise.<sup>46</sup>

### *Cosmic Christianity*

As we have noted, religion begins with a fall from original paradise. Humans become forgetful and are ontologically separated from the holy and themselves as they fall into disunity. Regarding themselves as solely historical beings and wishing to live in a desacralized world, modern beings have lost touch with the sacred. With the death of God, humans cannot experience the sacred on a conscious level and only the unconscious remains religious. Because humans have fallen into history, they are subject to its brutal forces and must confront the terror of history, a living hell that provokes despair. Christianity is the religion of fallen humans because modern beings are irremediably identified with history and progress and a rejection of the paradise expressed in archetypes.<sup>47</sup> Although Western Christianity is too deeply rooted to be shaken by criticism, Eliade feels distant sometimes from its spirit.<sup>48</sup> Eliade does, however, express a nostalgia for what he calls cosmic Christianity or cosmic religion.

As humans journey through the labyrinth of history, they search for a center by following an initiatory pattern. According to Eliade, we can find our center in cosmic Christianity, a place where, unlike the *deus otiosus*, Jesus is not remote. Cosmic Christianity, a natural religion, developed from the interaction between Christianity in central and western Europe and folk religions of rural areas. In tune with the cosmic rhythms, this popular religion perceived nature as the good work of God and not a realm of sin. Agricultural peasant gods and heroes are transformed into saints, the fertility goddesses are assimilated to the Virgin Mary or female saints,

religious behavior is celebrated in the feasts of the Church and incorporated into the cult of saints.<sup>49</sup> The dogmatic teachings of the Church play a minor role, and history is ignored. Nature is more important and a source of goodness because it is sanctified by the presence, death, and resurrection of Jesus, giving living matter, life and the world a religious dimension.<sup>50</sup> The Christ of the peasants of eastern Europe is non-historical, participates in the mysteries of life, and is present in the sacrament. This cosmic Christianity is not a new form of paganism, not a pagan-Christian syncretism, nor a paganization of Christianity, it is rather the impregnation of the peasant ancestral religion by the Christian spirit.<sup>51</sup>

The aura of nostalgia pervades cosmic Christianity because a nostalgia for a sanctified nature made sacred by the presence of Jesus dominates the attitudes of the peasants. There is also a nostalgia for paradise, a place apart from the terrors of history.<sup>52</sup> These nostalgic attitudes are examples of a passive revolt against the cataclysmic tragedies and injustices of history. Within this religion, our nostalgia for the mystery of God is satisfied by the sanctification of nature made by the presence of Jesus. Our nostalgia for the lost unity of the *coincidentia oppositorum* is also satisfied as we rediscover a unity with nature.

Eliade intimates in his works that he shares the nostalgias of the Rumanian peasants. He knows, however, that cosmic Christianity does not only exist in places like rural Rumania, but is also to be found in India, in Mediterranean religion, in Negro spirituals, and even in urban centers because, even though urbanites no longer share the values of agricultural society, the rhythms of nature—day and night and the change of seasons—still prevail.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, cosmic religion remains a concern for modern individuals. The best contemporary exemplification of cosmic religion is the theology of Teilhard de Chardin, which represents a resanctification of the world, life and matter.<sup>54</sup> Thus Eliade perceives a spiritual connection between a Christian theologian and Rumanian peasants. The mystery and holiness of nature is rediscovered in modern art by Chagall, who does not lose the sacred, primeval and maternal aspects of nature.<sup>55</sup>

If the Christian faith with its emphasis on the significance of history fails to answer our existential needs, is the cosmic Chris-



tianity of European peasants, even if such a religion is as idyllic as Eliade seem to imply, a viable alternative? It is highly doubtful that European peasants would admit to living in anything near a paradisaical condition. Since agricultural work is laborious and success uncertain because of natural forces beyond one's control, it is uncertain that any great number of people would perceive cosmic Christianity as a viable option and nothing more than an unrealistic fantasy. Eliade's nostalgic theological reflections are shaped by a vision of a rustic past of peasants living in harmony with nature and a view of archaic *homo religiosus* that is of questionable authenticity.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, it seems unlikely that modern beings shaped by the historical events of the twentieth century and technological advances could recapture an agricultural frame of mind. Since humans cannot go back to an idyllic agricultural age, we seem to have two choices: either going forward with purpose and courage or aimlessly wandering through the labyrinth of human existence.

### *Nostalgia for paradise*

Or can we return to an idyllic age? Eliade seems to think that we can. He thinks that *homo religiosus* of archaic religions lived in a kind of paradise where communication existed between heaven and earth. The encounter with divine beings was made possible by the ascension to heaven, and one was friends with the animals and possessed a knowledge of their language. The archaic individual was also in harmony with nature, which created in one a sense of cosmic relatedness. In one's mystical solidarity with nature, one was comfortably at home in the world and enjoyed a spiritual plenitude. By an indefinitely repeated invocation of archetypes, *homo religiosus* could remain near the real and meaningful. According to Eliade, modern beings would like to recapture and relive the paradisaical state summarized in the preceding assertions. To return to a primordial period and to an original plenitude, freedom and beatitude is the ardent wish of modern beings overwhelmed by the meaninglessness of profane existence. Such a concrete paradise can be gained in the present moment on earth. Eliade observes:

The longing for Paradise can be traced even in the most banal actions of the modern man. Man's concept of the *absolute* can never be completely

uprooted: it can only be debased. And primitive spirituality lives on in its own way not in action, not as a thing man can effectively accomplish, but as a *nostalgia* which creates things that become values in themselves: art, the sciences, social theory, and all the other things to which men will give the whole of themselves.<sup>57</sup>

By returning to the beginning to find one's roots, one demonstrates a desire to begin anew and to retain the lost paradise of the primordial period. On what basis does Eliade make this claim for modern beings? The foundation for his observation is grounded in his understanding of the nature of the sacred. The dialectic of the sacred reveals the nostalgia for paradise.<sup>58</sup> Eliade's convictions about the nostalgia of modern beings for paradise is also based on his own personal experience.

In his autobiography, Eliade acknowledges his pride that he is only three generations removed from Rumanian peasants, which made him feel close to the soul of the country.<sup>59</sup> Descended from a family of Moldavian yeoman, he would remind himself of his family heritage when he experienced moods of deep melancholy in adolescence.<sup>60</sup> Thus Eliade's own personal nostalgia for paradise—the cosmic Christianity of Rumanian peasants—is by his own admission precious to him. One wonders, however, whether a commitment with so few experiential roots can suffice to ground a theology. Eliade was born in Bucharest and lived most of his life in the city within its literary and scholarly milieu with time out for an adventure in India. Although he refers to the pleasure of hiking and climbing mountains during the summer, most of his life was spent in just this urban environment. Therefore, he really does not claim any firsthand knowledge of peasant culture, in fact, he tells us in his autobiography that his most experiential connection with the life-world of Rumanian peasants resulted from talking and making friends with Rumanian males while in the army. Even were Eliade nearly correct about the modern individual's quest for paradise, much of what he reports suggests that he discusses more about his own nostalgia than about any general human nostalgia.

Eliade suggests that he knows this. He is much too good a scholar not to recognize the diaphanous character of his nostalgia. We would do him greater justice if we understood his nostalgia as the occasion for achieving a new *maieutics*, a giving birth to ideas latent

in the mind, in order to awaken and renew human consciousness to the archaic symbols and archetypes living or dormant in the mind of all humankind.<sup>61</sup> He perceives the nostalgia for paradise as an ancient archetype hidden within the human mind trying to come forth. This new *maieutics*, or the more comprehensive term meta-psychoanalysis, is envisioned as giving birth to a new authentic and complete human being, becoming conscious of a common spirituality, and rescuing one from cultural provincialism and historical and existential relativism.<sup>62</sup> This vision is a proposal for a resacralization and remythologization of contemporary culture.<sup>63</sup> It is within the context of these goals that the nostalgia of paradise must be understood. Eliade's theological reflections suggest that they are the product of his religious imagination shaped by his understanding of archaic religion as well as by a nostalgia for paradise. Due to his cosmopolitan background and criticism of cultural provincialism and existential relativism, Eliade's theological reflections and nostalgia for the cosmic Christianity of Rumanian peasants is open to suspicion and suggests a possible camouflaging of his own theological position. Eliade's mind and body are in the twentieth century, but his heart is in the *illud tempus* of archaic religion.

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea Eliade, *No Souvernirs Journal, 1957-1969*, trans. Fred H. Johnson, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 18; *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt & Company, 1959), p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, *Ordeal by Labyrinth: Conversations with Claude-Henri Rocquet*, trans. Derek Coltman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 148-149.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 186.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne: Studies in Religious Myth and Symbol*, trans. J.M. Cohen (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), p. 122.

- <sup>10</sup> Idem, *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts*, ed. by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), p. 83.
- <sup>11</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 156.
- <sup>12</sup> Idem, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p. 154.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 37.
- <sup>14</sup> Idem, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), p. 151.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 161.
- <sup>16</sup> Idem, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 203.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 204.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 167.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 169-172.
- <sup>20</sup> Idem, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p. 119.
- <sup>21</sup> Idem, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp. 85-86.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 17; *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 37.
- <sup>23</sup> Kenneth Hamilton, "Homo Religiosus and Historical Faith," *The Journal of Bible and Religion* 33 (1965): 220.
- <sup>24</sup> Eliade, *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, p. 89.
- <sup>25</sup> Idem, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 291, 381.
- <sup>26</sup> Idem, *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, p. 95.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 100.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 100.
- <sup>29</sup> Idem, *Autobiography: Volume 1. Journey East, Journey West, 1907-1937*, trans. Mac Linscott Ricketts (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), p. 189.
- <sup>30</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 80; *Autobiography*, p. 224.
- <sup>31</sup> Thomas J.J. Altizer, "Mircea Eliade and the Death of God," *Cross Currents* 29/3 (1979): 262.
- <sup>32</sup> Mac Linscott Ricketts, "Mircea Eliade and the Death of God," *Religion in Life* 36 (1967): 40-52.
- <sup>33</sup> Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 98.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 95.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 95; *Autobiography*, p. 74.
- <sup>36</sup> Idem, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 126.
- <sup>37</sup> Idem, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 99.
- <sup>38</sup> Idem, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 87.
- <sup>39</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 282.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 297-298.
- <sup>41</sup> Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 19-93.
- <sup>42</sup> Eliade, *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, p. 167.
- <sup>43</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 54.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 267.
- <sup>45</sup> Idem, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, p. 82.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 122.
- <sup>47</sup> Idem, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 162.
- <sup>48</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 110.
- <sup>49</sup> Idem, *Myth and Reality*, p. 171.

<sup>50</sup> Idem, *Zalmoxis the Vanishing God: Comparative Studies in the Religions and Folklore of Dacia and Eastern Europe*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 251.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, *Myth and Reality*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, pp. 56-57, 116; *Journal*, pp. 93, 206.

<sup>54</sup> Idem, *Journal*, p. 261.

<sup>55</sup> Idem, *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts*, p. 92.

<sup>56</sup> John A. Saliba, 'Homo Religiosus' in *Mircea Eliade: An Anthropological Evaluation* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 99-141.

<sup>57</sup> Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 434.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>59</sup> Idem, *Autobiography*, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Idem, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961), p. 35.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>63</sup> Richard A. Ray, "Is Eliade's Metapsychoanalysis and End Run Around Bultmann's Demythologization?", In *Myth and the Crisis of Historical Consciousness*, eds. Lew W. Gibbs and W. Taylor Stevenson (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975), p. 66.

## DIE RELIGION ALFRED ROSENBERGS\*

HANS-P. HASENFRATZ

### *I. Einleitendes*

1. Angesichts einer angeblichen Tendenz zur “*Wiederverzauberung der Welt*” nach einer Phase der “Entmythologisierung<sup>1</sup>” mag eine Rückbesinnung auf *den* “Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts” indiziert erscheinen.

2. Der Schöpfer dieses “Mythus”, *Alfred Rosenberg*, 1893 in Reval geboren, studierte (nach Durchlaufen der Realschule und Abitur) am Polytechnikum in Riga Architektur. Sein Diplomexamen bestand er in Moskau, wohin die Technische Hochschule durch die Ereignisse des ersten Weltkrieges verlegt worden war und wo er die Oktoberrevolution als (eingestandenermaßen verständnisloser) Zeuge miterlebte. Ein Anerbieten, als Assistent in Moskau zu bleiben, lehnt R. ab und kehrt anfangs 1918 nach Reval zurück. Der Abzug der deutschen Truppen und die bevorstehende Gründung eines estnischen Staates bewegen ihn zur “Flucht” nach Deutschland. In München lernt er Eckart, den ersten Hauptschriftleiter des “Völkischen Beobachters”, kennen und wird ab ’21 sein Nachfolger. Die Bekanntschaft mit Hitler fällt ins Jahr ’19. Unmittelbar nach der “Machtergreifung” wird R. zum Chef des Aussenpolitischen Amtes der NSDAP im Rang eines Reichsleiters ernannt; seit ’34 obliegt ihm als offiziellem “Beauftragten des Führers” “die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP”. Sein 1930 erschienenes Compendium nationalsozialistischer “Weltanschauung”, der “Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts”<sup>2</sup>, hat ihn zum “Chefideologen” der Bewegung prädestiniert<sup>3</sup>. Als Ostexperte der NSDAP übernimmt er ab ’41 (Überfall auf die Sowjetunion) das Amt eines Reichsministers für die besetzten Ostgebiete und trägt damit die *juristische* Gesamtverantwortung für die Ereignisse im Osten, obwohl hier *faktisch* andere (etwa Gauleiter Koch, Himmlers SS) das Gesetz des Handelns diktiert haben. R. wurde vom Internationalen Militärtribunal in

Nürnberg zum Tod durch den Strang verurteilt. Vor seiner Hinrichtung (16. Okt. '46) soll er ein christliches Gebet zurückgewiesen haben<sup>4</sup>. So lässt sich, zusammenfassend, mit Recht sagen, dass R., der zu den Gründervätern der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung zählte, nicht nur ein Nationalsozialist "der ersten, sondern auch der letzten Stunde" gewesen ist<sup>5</sup>.

3. Hier soll es darum gehen, die *Religion R.s.* zu *beschreiben*, wie sie sich aus seinem Hauptwerk, dem "Mythus", zeigt<sup>6</sup>. Die Beschränkung auf den "Mythus" als Quelle rechtfertigt sich deshalb, weil der "Mythus" als in sich geschlossenes Ganzes gelesen sein will und weil sich die darin dargelegten religiösen Grundideen weder in der Auseinandersetzung mit gegnerischen Positionen noch im zeitlichen Verlauf verändert haben<sup>7</sup>. Damit ist zugleich gesagt, worum es *hier nicht* gehen soll. Es geht nicht um *wissenschaftliche Kritik* des R.schen "Mythus" oder seines "religiösen Ansatzes", sondern um reine *Beschreibung*<sup>8</sup>. Einen Text auf seine *Wissenschaftlichkeit* zu befragen, wenn man seinen *religiösen Gehalt beschreiben* will, wäre methodologisch widersinnig<sup>9</sup>. Er soll *hier* auch nicht darum gehen, die *religiöse Gedankenwelt* R.s aus bestimmten geistesgeschichtlichen Quellen *herzuleiten* oder von seiner Biographie oder von seiner "Persönlichkeit"<sup>10</sup> her zu *deuten*. Die meisten Leser R.s waren weder mit seinem Leben noch mit seiner "Persönlichkeit" vertraut, noch kannten sie seine "geistigen Väter" — etwa Eckehart, Chamberlain, Lagarde — anderswoher als aus seiner eigenen Darstellung — ganz zu schweigen von Figuren wie Gobineau, Lanz, Sebottendorf u.a.<sup>11</sup>. Das Hintergrundwissen des *hier* nur beschreibenden (weder historisch noch psychologisch interpretierenden) "Nachgeborenen" dürfte dem des damaligen Konsumenten des "Mythus" und "Gläubigen" — bei aller Bescheidenheit — schwerlich nachstehen, jedenfalls zur Beschreibung der R.schen "Botschaft" von damals hinreichen. Zum Schluss sei noch vor einer Unterschätzung der Wirkung R.schen religiösen Gedankenguts gewarnt. Auch wenn es stimmt, dass die hohen Auflageziffern des "Mythus" (oben Anm. 2) keinen Schluss darüber zulassen, wie viele Käufer tatsächlich über eine Lektüre der "ersten Bogen" hinausgekommen sind<sup>12</sup>, so hängt doch die Wirkung religiöser Texte nicht daran, wie viele Gläubige sie ganz gelesen oder gar verstanden haben<sup>13</sup>.

4. Man könnte fragen, ob das, was hier aus dem "Mythus" be-

geschrieben werden soll, tatsächlich unter die Kategorie “*Religion*” falle. Das läuft natürlich auf eine Definitionsfrage hinaus. Unter “*Religion*” soll *hier* ein Orientierungssystem verstanden werden, das sich durch seinen nicht-empirischen, wertenden Charakter von andern Orientierungssystemen unterscheidet<sup>14</sup>. Ein solches Orientierungssystem steht hier im Folgenden zur Deskription.

## II. “*Prinzipienlehre*”

1. Die *Seele* ist das Zentrum R.scher Religiosität und wird rekursiv als die Innenseite von Rasse definiert, umgekehrt die *Rasse* als “*Aussenbild*” von Seele<sup>15</sup>. Jede Rasse hat also “*ihre*” Seele, jede Seele “*ihre*” Rasse<sup>16</sup>. Das Leben einer Rasse ist “*Seelenbetätigung*”, letztlich nicht weiter hinterfragbar<sup>17</sup>; und die Weltgeschichte “*Rassengeschichte*”<sup>18</sup>, nicht aus klimatisch-geographischen noch gesellschaftlich-ideologischen Bedingungen deutbar<sup>19</sup>. Es gibt also keine Seelen “*an sich*”, nur “*Rassenseele*”, “*rassisch gebundene Volksseele*” als “*letzten Massstab*” *aller Werte*<sup>20</sup>.

2. Rasse als Aussenseite (oben Ziff. 1) der bewussten Seele gilt R. als “*das Ewig-Unbewusste*”<sup>21</sup>. Als weiteres unbewusstes “*Gegenstück zur Seele*” wird das *Blut* genannt<sup>22</sup>. Eine exakte Verhältnisbestimmung dieser beiden unbewussten anthropologischen Bereiche enthält uns R. vor<sup>23</sup>. Es ist aber anzunehmen, dass “*Blut*” das Prinzip biologischer Kontinuität der Rassenseele (oben Ziff. 1) in der zeitlichen Abfolge der Generationen bezeichnen soll. Die “*Auseinandersetzung zwischen Blut und Umwelt, zwischen Blut und Blut*”, stellt “*die letzte uns erreichbare Erscheinung*” dar, hinter der zu suchen und zu forschen dem Menschen verwehrt ist<sup>24</sup>. Diese vom “*Blutstrom*”<sup>25</sup> getragene Rassenseele “*entfaltet sich in einer Natur, die (in ihr) gewisse Eigenschaften weckt und andere zurückdämmt*”. Seele, Rasse, Natur sind somit “*die ewigen Voraussetzungen, das Dasein*”, aus dem *Kultur* als “*Sosein*” sich ergibt<sup>26</sup>. Kultur ist “*Bewusstseinsgestaltung des Vegetativ-Vitalen einer Rasse*”, wobei die “*Kluft*” zwischen diesem Vegetativen und dem Bewusstsein als spannungsgeladene *Polarität*<sup>27</sup> “*Voraussetzung jeder Schöpfung*” wird<sup>28</sup>. So ist der Mensch, der an beiden “*Polen*” Anteil hat, “*an diese Natur gebunden*” und staunt gleichzeitig “*über das Ewig-Eigenartige seines nicht natürlichen Ichs*”<sup>29</sup>.



3. Aus dem *Dasein* (der rassengebundenen Seele) heisst es das *Sosein* zu bestimmen (oben Ziff. 2), während umgekehrt die Konfessionen “dem lebendigen Dasein der Völker” ihr sosein aufzwingen<sup>30</sup>. Das “nordisch-europäische Bekenntnis” lautet darum: “Wie der Mensch, so sein Glaube”, im Unterschied zu “den Kirchen aller Bekenntnisse”, wo galt: “Wie der Glaube, so der Mensch”<sup>31</sup>. Das “Programm”, nach welchem das Dasein das Sosein bestimmt, nach welchem die Seele sich im nichtseelischen Bereich entfaltet (oben Ziff. 2), ist der in der Rassenseele angelegte “*Mythus*”<sup>32</sup>: im Mythus liegt “das letztmögliche ‘Wissen’ einer Rasse”, die “nicht fassbare Zusammenfassung aller Richtungen des Ich” und der Rassengemeinschaft beschlossen<sup>33</sup>; er ist auf Verwirklichung der ihm ein-gebildeten “Höchstwerte” aus<sup>34</sup>. Die dem rassengebundenen Mythus entsprechende “Persönlichkeit” manifestiert sich als *Typus*: als “zeitgebundene plastische Form eines ewigen rassisch-seelischen Gehalts” — eben des Mythus<sup>35</sup>. Der Mythus schafft sich seinen Typus<sup>36</sup>.

4. Die “mythisch programmierte” Rassenseele gestaltet nicht nur die Persönlichkeit zum Typus (oben Ziff. 3), sondern den gesamten nichtseelischen Bereich zum “*Lebensraum*”<sup>37</sup> der rassisch bestimmten Nation; die Gestaltungsmittel sind ihr Kunst, Religion, Philosophie, Moral, Wissenschaft, Technik, Recht, Politik<sup>38</sup>. Und indem die Rassenseele den nichtseelischen Bereich “nach ihrem Mythus” formt, geht sie nicht “aus sich heraus”, sondern “kommt zu sich selbst”, betreibt sie ihre — “*Selbstverwirklichung*”<sup>39</sup>.

### III. Von Gott und der Seele

1. Da alles, was Sein in Raum und Zeit hat, nicht Gott zugehört<sup>40</sup>, kann die Seele nach Ausschaltung von Raum und Zeit als “reines Subjekt” nur Gott zum “Objekt” haben, ja sie schafft sich “die Idee ‘Gott’ als neues Objekt”<sup>41</sup>. So ist die Seele zugleich *gottgleich*<sup>42</sup> und von Gott frei<sup>43</sup>: ein mystisches Paradox unter vielen bei R. Die *Identitäts*beziehung zwischen Seele und Gott schliesst eine *Analogie* zwischen Geschöpf und Schöpfer (*analogia entis*), wie sie christliche Scholastik vertritt, natürlich aus<sup>44</sup>.

2. Die Seele, die mit sich und damit mit Gott eins ist<sup>45</sup>, ist ein-

sam<sup>46</sup>. Diese Abgesondertheit macht ihren Adel und ihre Ehre aus<sup>47</sup>. Was ist es, was diese einsame *Monade*<sup>48</sup> mit ihresgleichen verbindet? Das gemeinsame rassisch-seelische "Programm" (oben Ziff. II 3): auf bewusster Stufe derselbe *Mythus*, auf unbewusster (oben Ziff. II 2) dasselbe Blut. Für "fremdseelische" Wirklichkeit hingegen ist diese Monade, mit Leibniz zu sprechen, "fensterlos": "es führt keine Brücke eines wahren Verstehens von ihr zu einem Chinesen, geschweige denn zum Wesen eines syrischen oder afrikanischen Bastards"<sup>49</sup>. Der *Mythus*, der die nordischen Monaden zur Rassenseele, die Individuen nordischen Blutes zur Rasse "gleichschaltet", gewinnt im germanischen Menschen als Traum "vom Paradies der Ehre und der Pflicht"<sup>50</sup> seelische Gestalt und drängt nach Verwirklichung. Als diesem *Mythus* zur Verwirklichung ein-gebildete "*Höchstwerte*" (oben Ziff. II 3) sind hier Ehre und Pflicht genannt<sup>51</sup>. "*Ehre*" bestimmt R. tautologisch (oben a.A.) durch "den Adel der allein auf sich gestellten Seele"<sup>52</sup>, durch "die freie, schöne und adlige Seele"<sup>53</sup>, was letztlich auf die "Ehrfurcht" der Monade "vor sich selbst"<sup>54</sup>, vor ihrer Gottgleichheit hinausläuft. Mit "*Pflicht*", von R. viel beschworen, nie definiert, wird das schicksalhaft empfundene<sup>55</sup> Sollen gemeint sein, das im Selbstverwirklichungsprozess der Rassenseele ihrer Ehre dient. In Gestalt des deutschen Frontsoldaten, im "Feldgrauen"<sup>56</sup>, hat sich der *Mythus* von Ehre und Pflicht ihren anschaulichsten Typus geschaffen (oben Ziff. II 3 a.E.)<sup>57</sup>.

3. Nach dem Vorgang Augustins<sup>58</sup> besitzt die Seele 3 *Kräfte*, mit denen sie "in die Welt hineingreift"<sup>59</sup>: den Willen, der sich sein Objekt erwählt; die Vernunft, die das Ergriffene durchschaut; das Gedächtnis, das das Erschaute (auf Abruf) verwahrt. Jede Seele ist so eine göttliche Trinität<sup>60</sup> — nicht per analogiam, sondern per identitatem (oben Ziff. 1 a.E.). Ihre 3 Kräfte verbinden über die Sinne das Ich mit der Natur, zu welch letzterer auch der Mensch als Person (Körper) rechnet (oben Ziff. II 2 a.E.)<sup>61</sup>. An den Person-Begriff knüpft sich bei R. eine weitere Einteilung der *Seelenvermögen*, welche am Menschen als raum-zeitlichen Individuum orientiert ist: Person mit Trieb und Verstand macht die Leiblichkeit des Menschen und ihre Interessen aus — im Unterschied zur *Persönlichkeit* mit Willen und Vernunft, die als "das Metaphysische im Menschen" dem Stofflichen entgegensteht; im Unterschied auch zur menschlichen

Individualität, welche “die hier auf Erden untrennbare Vereinigung von Person und Persönlichkeit” bedeutet<sup>62</sup>. Die Vernunft erkennt Begründungszusammenhänge, der Verstand Ursachenzusammenhänge; der Wille ist frei und schöpferisch, der Trieb unfrei und unschöpferisch<sup>63</sup>. Die Persönlichkeit als übersinnlich willenhaft bestimmtes Wesen steht zur Person als sinnlich triebhaft bestimmtem Wesen im Verhältnis schöpferischer Polarität (oben Ziff. II 2 a.E.): der Wille kann, muss den Trieb beim Prozess schöpferisch-bewussten Gestaltens in Pflicht nehmen<sup>64</sup>.

4. Diese “vernunft-willenhafte Rassenseele”<sup>65</sup> kann an ihrer “mythisch programmierten” (oben Ziff. II 4) “Gestaltusbildung”<sup>66</sup> in den nichtseelischen Bereich hinein verhindert werden. Wie das? Indem ihr eigenes mythisches Programm von Fremdwerten ausser Kraft gesetzt oder von “Lehnwerten” umprogrammiert wird. Unter einem Fremdwert ist ein “*feindlicher Wert*” zu verstehen, also ein Höchstwert aus dem Mythos fremdgearteter Rassenseele (jedenfalls ein Wert ausserhalb “eigenseelischer Programmkompetenz”); wird ein solcher Fremdwert als Höchstwert ins eigene mythische Programm eingebaut, so dass er anstelle eigener Höchstwerte Steuerungsfunktionen übernimmt, dann heisst er “*Lehnwert*” oder “*Adoptivwert*”<sup>67</sup>. Solche vom Blutzusammenhang gelöste<sup>68</sup> Lehnwerte sind — nach R. — einerseits der “*Universalismus*” (repräsentiert durch römischen Katholizismus und Judentum mit ihren Weltherrschaftsansprüchen<sup>69</sup>, durch christliches Liebes- und freimaurerisches Humanitätsideal, durch demokratische Gleichmacherei und schrankenlosen Wirtschaftsliberalismus, durch “russische Leidens- und Mitleidenslehre”, Pazifismus und Marxismus)<sup>70</sup> und andererseits der “*Individualismus*” (sein “*Zwillingsbruder*”)<sup>71</sup>. Als Aussenseite (oben Ziff. II 2 a.A.) der mythisch “überfremdeten” Rassenseele zeigt sich rassistische Ueberfremdung, Bastardierung, “*Rassenchaos*”<sup>72</sup>; wie umgekehrt “*physische Bastardierung*” im “*dauernden Sündengefühl*” ihre psychische “*Begleiterscheinung*” zeitigt<sup>73</sup>, denn: “Es gibt für den Menschen nur eine Schuld, die, nicht er selbst zu sein”<sup>74</sup>. Voraussetzung, in einer derartigen seelisch-rassistischen *Entfremdungs- und Ueberfremdungssituation* die *eigenen* Werte der Rassenseele im Leben verwirklichen zu können, ist “*mythisches Neuerleben*” durch “*mythische Rückerinnerung*”<sup>75</sup>, flankiert von *rassenhygienischen* Massnahmen, die “auch die körper-

lichen Voraussetzungen dieser Werte erhalten und stärken'', wozu der völkische *Nationalstaat* den gesetzgeberischen und politischen Rahmen zu schaffen hat<sup>76</sup>.

#### IV. Von seelischer "Selbstverwirklichung"<sup>77</sup>

1. "Mystik und Lebenstat" sind die beiden "Pole" europäisch-abendländischen Daseins, der Rhythmus der "nordischen Seele", die stets "zu Gott zu" und stets "von Gott her"<sup>78</sup> und zugleich mit ihm identisch ist (oben Ziff. III 1). Tat ist "eine Form unserer Seelenaktivität", "Ausdruck eines inneren Wesens in einer Seelen-Entwicklung ohne irdischen Zweck".<sup>79</sup> Das meint wohl, dass die *Selbstentfaltung* der Seele in den nichtseelischen Bereich ihren *Zweck in der Seele selbst* trägt und nicht im Nichtseelischen.

2. Und das wiederum wirft die Frage auf nach der *Art der Beziehung zwischen Seele und nichtseelischem Bereich* im Prozess seelischer "Selbstverwirklichung"—nicht hinreichend zu klären durch den generellen Hinweis auf ein "Urphänomen" wie "die Polarität aller Erscheinungen" (oben Ziff. II 2 mit Anm. 27; vgl. oben Ziff. 1 a.A. und III 3 a.E.). R.s Ausdruckweise in dieser Sache entbehrt der Eindeutigkeit: die gestaltende Aktivität der "Nichtnatur"<sup>80</sup> richtet sich als "Kampf" gegen die Natur, geht als "Weltüberwindung" "durch die Natur hindurch"<sup>81</sup>, um sich der Welt zu "bemächtigen", sie umzuwandeln<sup>82</sup>; trachtet aber gleichzeitig nicht darnach, "der Erde zu entstreben", sondern sie "einzugeisten"<sup>83</sup>, so dass an die Stelle der "Vergewaltigung der Natur" "ihre Vollendung" tritt<sup>84</sup>. Das Beziehungsspektrum reicht hier von *Antithese* bis zu einer Art "Komplementarität". Vielleicht wird man dieser "Unschärferelation" gerecht, wenn man annehmen darf, die kämpferische Unterwerfung der Natur durch die Nichtnatur diene nicht ihrer Negation, nicht der "Vernichtung" ihrer Gesetze, sondern der "Steigerung, Krönung eines Werdens" als "Ausdruck des Seins" (oben Ziff. 1): also ihrer Überhöhung<sup>85</sup>.

3. Diese seelische "Selbstverwirklichung" durch "weltüberwindende Eingestung" der Natur (oben Ziff. 2) äussert sich auf zweierlei Weise: "religiös-künstlerisch-metaphysisch" und "luziferisch-empirisch"<sup>86</sup>, erstreckt sich damit auf *alle* (geistiger Durchdringung zugänglichen) Daseinsbereiche (oben Ziff. II 4).

Der Architekt R. hat auf *ästhetischem* Gebiet<sup>87</sup> dem Verhältnis zwischen Seele und Nichtseelischem, Nichtnatur und Natur seine besondere Aufmerksamkeit zugewandt (die Mehrzahl der Formulierungen oben Ziff. 2 entstammt denn auch diesbezüglichen Passagen). Im künstlerischen Prozess durchsetzt künstlerischer, gestaltender Wille ein Äusseres "mit seelischer Stosskraft", erhebt es "von Innen heraus über sich selbst"<sup>88</sup>. So kann nun das seelischwillenhaft gestaltete Äussere (das Kunstwerk) im Innern des Rezipierenden gleichgerichtete Impulse schöpferischen, gestaltenden Wollens auslösen, "die formende Tatkraft" seiner Seele steigern. Indem der Künstler "von innen nach aussen", der Empfänger "von aussen nach innen" geht, schliesst sich der "Kreislauf des 'ästhetischen Gefühls'".<sup>89</sup> Dieser Kreislauf des ästhetischen Gefühls schliesst sich aber nur, kann sich nur schliessen, wenn der künstlerische Wille "im Zusammenklang mit dem Gesamtwillen" seelisch-rassischer "Selbstverwirklichung" schwingt<sup>90</sup>. Andernfalls "entartet" Kunst zu Subjektivismus oder Internationalismus (oben Ziff. III 4)<sup>91</sup>.

4. Da nach R. Europas *religiöses* Suchen "durch eine artfremde Form (durch das jüdisch entstellte Christentum römischer Regie) an der Quelle vergiftet" und in den Dienst eines "Lehnglaubens" gezwungen wurde, hatte es sich in der Kunst "ein echtes Medium der Weltüberwindung, eine Religion an sich" geschaffen<sup>92</sup>. Geblieben ist die Sehnsucht nach einem Christentum, das der germanischen Seele entspricht, nach einer "echten blut- und artgemässen Glaubensform", nach einer Deutschen Kirche, in der "der Mythos des Blutes" gewissermassen "statutarische" Gestalt gewönne<sup>93</sup>. Eine solche dogmenfreie<sup>94</sup> kirchliche Gemeinschaft ist nicht "Selbstzweck": alle "Religionsformen" sind vielmehr "wandelbare Mittel" "im Dienste des rassegebundenen Volkstums"<sup>95</sup>. Denn die Bindungen der rassisch bestimmten Nation stehen höher als kirchliche Bindungen, Nationalehre geht vor Nächstenliebe<sup>96</sup>. Die "Aufgaben der Nation immer wieder von neuem zu erfassen, ihnen in Ehrfurcht zu dienen": "dieses Leben ist in Wahrheit die ewige Seligkeit"<sup>97</sup>. So dient die wandelbare statutarisch verfasste Religion (s.o.) allein dazu, die ewige "tat-mystische"<sup>98</sup> Religion rassenseelischer "Selbstverwirklichung" "metaphysisch" zu "untermauern"<sup>99</sup>. Ihr Kult ist zeitgebundene Darstellung des zeitlosen Mythos<sup>100</sup>.

5. An der "selbstverwirklichung" der Rassenseele im nichtseelischen Bereich haben die *Geschlechter* bei gleichem mythischem Programm geschlechtsspezifischen Anteil, entsprechend der "ewigen Polarität" (oben Ziff. 2 a.A.), die Männlich und Weiblich in schöpferischem Spannungsbogen zusammenschliesst<sup>101</sup>. Aristoteles und Thomas stehen R. Pate, wenn er weibliches und männliches Prinzip als Materie und Form kategorial aufeinander bezieht. Nach seinen Worten beruht "der Wert" der Frau als "Behüterin des Unbewussten" (oben Ziff. II 2 a.A.) auf der "Blutserhaltung und Rassenvermehrung", der des Mannes als Ideenbildner auf der Typenzeugung<sup>102</sup>. Wird die "Opferfähigkeit" der Frau "in den Dienst eines Typus gezwungen", so erreicht ihre "lyrische Leidenschaft" dieselbe heroische Qualität wie "der Formwille des Mannes"<sup>103</sup>. Die Frau geht "lyrisch", vereinzelt, der Mann "architektonisch", "zusammenschauend" an Leben und Welt heran<sup>104</sup>. Bei dieser anthropologischen Sachlage kann denn auch nicht der "Symbiose" von Mann und Frau in der Familie, sondern nur dem kriegerischen "Zweckverband" von Mann und Mann im *Männerbund* staatsbildende und staatserhaltende Kraft zuerkannt werden<sup>105</sup>: die Geschlecht und Familie übergreifende und verbindende Architektonik des Staates ist Gemeinschaftstat des Mannes; und "das preussische, dann deutsche Heer war eines der grandiossten Beispiele des architektonischen, dem nordischen Menschen entsprechenden, auf Ehre und Pflicht aufgebauten Männerbundes"<sup>106</sup>.

6. Der *Staat* ist die machtvollste und umfassendste architektonische Gestaltung seelisch-rassischen Lebens. Aber auch er ist nicht Selbstzweck (oben Ziff. 4), nur "Mittel zur Volkserhaltung"<sup>107</sup>, das meint: zur Selbstenfaltung der Rassenseele in der rassisch bestimmten Nation. Denn "Volk und Rasse" stehen höher als "der jeweilige Staat und seine Formen"<sup>108</sup>. Immerhin schwebt R. als Staat der Zukunft ein ständisch gegliederter, männerbündisch bestimmter (oben Ziff. 5) "Ordensstaat" vor: regiert von einem "Ordensrat" (und dem aus ihm gewählten "Führer"), gestützt von einem "Leistungsadel", getragen von der korporativ verfassten Volksgemeinschaft<sup>109</sup>. Ein egalitäres "Volk von Brüdern" würde "Ausgleichung aller Wetgefälle, aller Spannungen" bedeuten und den sozialen Organismus aller schöpferischen Polarität

(oben Ziff. 5 a.A.), damit "aller Lebensdynamik" berauben<sup>110</sup>. Das Wesen des Staates ist "stets Macht"<sup>111</sup>. Die Instrumente des Staates zur artgerechten — mit andern Worten: seelengemässen — Gestaltung, Erhaltung, Gewinnung von "Lebensraum" sind *Recht* und *Politik* (oben Ziff. II 4). Recht und Politik als "Moral" und "Macht" begrifflich scheiden oder gar wertend gegeneinander ausspielen zu wollen hiesse verkennen, dass beide als "Äusserungen des gleichen Willens" der Verwirklichung "rassischen Höchstwerts" dienen<sup>112</sup>. Bedeutet Politik "äussere Sicherung zwecks Stärkung eines Volkstums", so steht ihr Recht nirgends entgegen, wenn "einzig und allein" das, "was der deutschen Ehre dient", als Recht gelten soll<sup>113</sup>. Ehre aber ist, wie wir wissen (oben Ziff. III 2), nichts anderes als "der Adel der allein auf sich gestellten Seele", die "Ehrfurcht" der Seelenmonade "vor sich selbst", vor ihrer Gottgleichheit, womit sich der "tat-mystische" Zirkel (oben Ziff. 1 mit Anm. 78) rassenseelischer "Selbstverwirklichung", Selbstfindung schliesst — nicht ohne (als echter *circulus vitiosus*) eine ganze Welt in Trümmern zurückgelassen zu haben.

#### V. Ausblick

Der rein beschreibende (oben Ziff. I 3) Religionswissenschaftler dürfte seine Kompetenz nicht überschreiten, wenn er sich zum Schluss die Frage stellt, ob der "Mythus" *heute* noch "lebe". In einer mythisch "wiederverzauberten" (oben Ziff. I 1) "postmodernen" Welt wird er sein Augenmerk auf solche zeitgenössische religiöse Bewegungen richten, die der menschlichen Seele göttliche Qualität zusprechen, die Menschengruppen aufgrund biologischer Merkmale (etwa der weiblichen Geschlechtsmerkmale) "sakralisieren", die einen Anspruch auf eigene "Selbstverwirklichung" durch eben solche Heiligsprechungen religiös sanktionieren. Und er glaubt hier "faschistoide" Mythologeme aus dem "alten" — ewig jungen — "Mythus" wiederzuerkennen.

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<sup>1</sup> Etwa in New Age. R. König, *New Age*, Geheime Gehirnwäsche (Neuhausen-Stuttgart <sup>3</sup>1987) 11, 27ff. Man vgl. hier die sog. Gaiahypothese, d.h. die "Remythologisierung" unseres Planeten Erde zur Göttin Gaia (ebd. 41, 52).

<sup>2</sup> A. Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit (München <sup>1</sup>1930). Die Gesamtaufl. hat 1942 die Millionenhöhe überschritten.

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. noch den Entwurf des Führererlasses betr. die Ernennung R.s zum "Beauftragten des Führers zur Sicherung der Nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung" vom 9.2. 1940. Dokument NG-1283, abgedr. b. H.-G. Seraphim (Hrsg.), *Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs 1934/35 und 1939/40* (München 1964) 201f.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. F.-W. Haack, *Blut-Mythus und Rasse-Religion*, Neugermanische und deutsch-völkische Religiosität (München <sup>1</sup>1983) 55.

<sup>5</sup> R. Baumgärtner, *Weltanschauungskampf im Dritten Reich*, Die Auseinandersetzung der Kirchen mit Alfred Rosenberg (Veröff. d. Kommission f. Zeitgesch., Reihe B, Bd. 22) (Mainz <sup>1</sup>1977) 6. In diesem Buch findet sich alles Wissenswerte über R.s Herkunft und Werdegang vor '33, seine Ämter und seinen Einfluss in Partei und Staat, sein Schrifttum, dessen geistige Hintergründe und Auswirkungen (christliche u. kirchliche Reaktionen auf den "Mythus"), seine Persönlichkeit. Eine kurze Biographie auch b. Seraphim (wie Anm. 3) 9ff. Speziell zur Auseinandersetzung der Bekennenden Kirche mit R.s "Mythus" H. Iber, *Christlicher Glaube oder rassistischer Mythos* (Europ. Hochschulschr., Reihe 23, Bd. 286) (Frankfurt a.M./Bern/New York/Paris 1987).

<sup>6</sup> Ich benütze hier die 57.-58. Aufl. von 1935. Einmal, weil sie sich in der Bibliothek meines Schwiegervaters fand, eines badischen Pfarrers aus dem weiteren Umkreis der Bekennenden Kirche. Dann, weil die Paginierung dieser Ausgabe mit den vom kirchlichen Schrifttum gegen R. um die Mitte der Dreissigerjahre (also auf dem Höhepunkt der Auseinandersetzung) verwendeten Ausgaben übereinstimmt. Dazu hatte die schwiegerväterliche Bücherei aufzuweisen: R. Homann, *Der Mythos und das Evangelium* (Witten <sup>3</sup>1935); K. Hutten, *Christus oder Deutschglaube?* (Stuttgart 1935); A. Rosenberg, *An die Dunkelmänner unserer Zeit* (München <sup>6</sup>o.J. [1935]). Diese Schrift R.s ist eine Duplik auf die katholischen "Studien zum Mythos des XX. Jahrhunderts", erschienen erstmals gegen Ende 1934 als *Amtliche Beilage zum Kirchlichen Anzeiger für die Erzdiözese Köln*.

<sup>7</sup> Man vgl. R.s unveröffentlichte "Weltanschaulichen Thesen" von 1940. Dokument PS-1749 b. Seraphim (wie Anm. 3) 239ff. Dass sie allerdings "die Lektüre des 'Mythus'" zu "ersetzen" vermöchten, wie Seraphim (ebd. 239) meint, könnte ich nicht behaupten.

<sup>8</sup> Die Berechtigung *anderer* Methoden als der *hier für unsre Zwecke* gewählten beschreibenden soll durch die getroffene Wahl in keiner Weise angetastet werden. Ich verweise etwa auf die (in vieler Hinsicht) mustergültige Widerlegung des R.schen religiösen Ansatzes durch den Philosophen Th. Litt, *Der deutsche Geist und das Christentum*, Vom Wesen geschichtlicher Begegnung (Leipzig 1938), dessen Schrift ebenfalls die schwiegerväterliche Pfarrbibliothek (vgl. oben Anm. 6) bestückte.

<sup>9</sup> R.s "religiöse Kompetenz" wird durch den Nachweis von falschen Quellenzitierten (S. 567 beruft sich R. beispielsweise auf den "ehrwürdigen Sachsenspiegel"; in Wirklichkeit steht der angezogene Satz in einer über 250 Jahre jüngeren Glosse)



so wenig geschmälert, wie die des Evangelisten Matthäus durch falsche Prophezenitzitate (z.B. Mt 13,35). Deshalb trifft auch der Versuch der katholischen "Studien" (wie Anm. 6), R. religiöse Kompetenz durch Nachweis wissenschaftlicher Inkompetenz absprechen zu wollen — letztlich ins Leere.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Baumgärtners Exkurs zur Persönlichkeit R.s. Ders. (wie Anm. 5) 134ff.

<sup>11</sup> Religiöse Texte verlieren nicht unbedingt durch geringe Kenntnis ihrer kulturgeschichtlichen Hintergründe, ihrer Verfasser, Überlieferer und deren Lebensumstände. Man vgl. die Gathas, Veden, Brahmanas, Upanischaden.

<sup>12</sup> So Seraphim (wie Anm. 3) 14.

<sup>13</sup> Man vgl. die Verbreitung der Bibel mit der Zahl derjenigen Christen, die sie ganz durchgelesen haben. In diesem Zusammenhang sei auch auf die "moderne" Illusion verwiesen, "verständlichere" Bibelübersetzungen vermöchten mehr Christen zur Bibellese "animieren". Vielleicht sind uns gar die paulinischen Briefe (aus denen ungezählte Christen Trost schöpften und schöpfen) deshalb erhalten geblieben (und nicht in Rumpelkammern vermodert), weil sie für die Empfänger so schwer verständlich waren!

<sup>14</sup> Wissenschaft: empirisch, nicht wertend; Ideologie: empirisch, wertend; Philosophie: nicht-empirisch, nicht wertend. Die Definition verbindet Elemente der Religionsbegriffe bei Parsons und Waardenburg. Im Einzelfall wird eine genaue Abgrenzung nicht immer leicht sein.

<sup>15</sup> 2, 529. Blossse Seitenzahlen beziehen sich hier und im Folgenden auf die oben Anm. 6 genannte Ausg. des "Mythus". — Dieser Beitrag ist keine "Konkordanz": es werden nicht sämtliche Stellen angeführt, an denen ein Gedanke R.s möglicherweise zu belegen wäre.

<sup>16</sup> 116: so fast wörtlich.

<sup>17</sup> 117.

<sup>18</sup> 628. Cf. auch 23.

<sup>19</sup> 41, 107. Cf. auch 17.

<sup>20</sup> 697.

<sup>21</sup> 512.

<sup>22</sup> 257.

<sup>23</sup> 258: *Rasse* und *Ich*, *Blut* und *Seele* stünden "im engsten Zusammenhange".

<sup>24</sup> 23: so fast wörtlich.

<sup>25</sup> 684.

<sup>26</sup> 251: so fast wörtlich.

<sup>27</sup> 125f.: "die Polarität aller Erscheinungen" ist für R. ein "Urphänomen".

<sup>28</sup> 140/41.

<sup>29</sup> 266.

<sup>30</sup> 251, 635.

<sup>31</sup> 145.

<sup>32</sup> Wenn das auch R. so nicht formuliert hat, kommt doch sein Mythusbegriff der modernen Auffassung des Mythos als biologisches oder soziales Programm (Burkert) der Sache nach recht nahe.

<sup>33</sup> 684, 459.

<sup>34</sup> 251. Für den "germanischen Menschen": das "Paradies der Ehre und der Pflicht" (455). Dazu unten Ziff. III 2.

<sup>35</sup> 531. Cf. 529 u. 449: Persönlichkeit und Typus "bedingen und steigern" einander.

<sup>36</sup> 2, 481 (601). Es gilt auch das Umgekehrte: "das Erleben des Typus" führt zur "Erkenntnis des Mythos" (531).

<sup>37</sup> 676/77 (u. pass.).

- <sup>38</sup> Cf. 262/63, 343f., 451ff. (526, 599/600, 684, 687/88, 697).
- <sup>39</sup> 689/90. Es ist interessant, hier (u. pass.) auf den "faschistoiden Horizont" des heutigen Modewortes "Selbstverwirklichung" hinweisen zu können. — Vgl. unten Ziff. V a.E.
- <sup>40</sup> 224.
- <sup>41</sup> 221/22.
- <sup>42</sup> 246 u. pass.
- <sup>43</sup> 223 u. ähnlich pass.
- <sup>44</sup> 246ff. — Vgl. auch unten Ziff. 3.
- <sup>45</sup> 234.
- <sup>46</sup> 389 u. pass.
- <sup>47</sup> 238/39. Cf. 235: der "völkisch"-rassenhygienische Aspekt dieses Gedankens.
- <sup>48</sup> 391 u. ähnlich pass.
- <sup>49</sup> Cf. 690ff., das Zitat 694.
- <sup>50</sup> Siehe oben Anm. 34. R. kann "Traum" und "Mythus" geradezu synonym gebrauchen.
- <sup>51</sup> 154 u. ähnlich pass. 146f.: Ehre und Pflicht gegen Liebe und Mitleid (ähnlich 169f. u. 563).
- <sup>52</sup> 238/39.
- <sup>53</sup> 228, 238.
- <sup>54</sup> Cf. 623.
- <sup>55</sup> Cf. 399.
- <sup>56</sup> Cf. 448ff., 518ff., 618ff., 700f. An den beiden letzten Stellen: Kult "der deutschen Feldgrauen" als "Märtyrer der Volksehre".
- <sup>57</sup> 492/93.
- <sup>58</sup> Die *menschliche* Seele mit ihren 3 Kräften (*memoria*, *intellectus*, *voluntas*) als Analogon zur *göttlichen* Trinität (Vater, Sohn, Geist). R. ordnet im umgekehrten Reihenfolge, was seine Bevorzugung des *Willenhaften* zum Ausdruck bringt.
- <sup>59</sup> 239. Das Folgende freier wiedergegeben.
- <sup>60</sup> 236/37, 239.
- <sup>61</sup> 242.
- <sup>62</sup> 349. — Vgl. auch unten Anm. 81 (Persönlichkeit).
- <sup>63</sup> 325 u. 341ff. R. wirft *Schopenhauer* vor, zwischen freiem, schöpferischem Willen und unfreiem, unschöpferischen Trieb nicht hinreichend scharf unterschieden zu haben (334ff.).
- <sup>64</sup> Cf. 336, 342. Der "Geist" brauche — gegen *Klages* — nicht "Widersacher der Seele" zu sein (137ff.).
- <sup>65</sup> 79.
- <sup>66</sup> Cf. 683: "Verhinderung der Gestaltausbildung" = "Sünde".
- <sup>67</sup> Zur Terminologie 411.
- <sup>68</sup> Cf. 22.
- <sup>69</sup> 632: "Katholizismus bricht jedem Nationalismus das Rückgrat", 463: "der jüdische Mythus, die vom Gott Jahwe den Gerechten zugesagte Weltherrschaft".
- <sup>70</sup> Cf. 200ff. u. pass.
- <sup>71</sup> 695. Ähnlich 387. Cf. auch 539.
- <sup>72</sup> Ein von R. oft gebrauchtes "Reizwort". Siehe Sach- und Namensverzeichnis s.v.
- <sup>73</sup> 71 (das ganze "blutschänderische Dasein" des Bastards als der "Sünde Sold").
- <sup>74</sup> 458.
- <sup>75</sup> 685.

<sup>76</sup> 577. Gegen die *Spenglersche* "Nichtumkehrbarkeit" menschlichen Geschehens setzt R. die Möglichkeit rassisch-seelischer Erneuerung durch "rassisch-seelisches Erwachen", Heimfinden "zu den urewigen Werten" (404).

<sup>77</sup> Dazu oben Ziff. III 4 a.E. mit Anm. 39.

<sup>78</sup> 273, 259, 248. R. spricht von der "*tat-mystischen* Grundstimmung des nordisch-germanischen Geistes" (270). Vgl. auch unten Anm. 98.

<sup>79</sup> 271: im Unterschied zu *jüdischer* Betriebsamkeit, die stets auf einen "rein irdisch-leiblichen Zweck" gerichtet sei. Vgl. unten Anm. 86.

<sup>80</sup> 266.

<sup>81</sup> 389, 262, 418, 347f. — Vgl. auch oben Ziff. III 3 (das "dem Stoff entgegengesetzte" "*Metaphysische im Menschen*": die Persönlichkeit) u. unten Anm. 86.

<sup>82</sup> 343.

<sup>83</sup> 385/86.

<sup>84</sup> 252.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. 134. Vgl. auch unten Ziff. 3 bei Anm. 88.

<sup>86</sup> 262ff.: *luziferisch* sei "der Kampf um Unterjochung der Materie", wenn ohne "irdische" Abzweckung (wenn nicht "subjektiver Vorteil" das "treibende Motiv"); *sataniſch*, wenn "durch rein triebhafte Motive" diktiert (was "die jüdische Einstellung zur Welt" charakterisiere) (263/64). Vgl. oben Ziff. 1 mit Anm. 79.

<sup>87</sup> ¼ des Gesamtumfangs (275-450) ist im "Mythus" allein der Abhandlung *ästhetischer* Probleme vorbehalten.

<sup>88</sup> 305.

<sup>89</sup> 417/18 (cf. auch 410).

<sup>90</sup> 426, 303.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. 351, 445f.

<sup>92</sup> 442f., auch 257.

<sup>93</sup> 159, 215, 614/15.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. 36, 610/11.

<sup>95</sup> 251, 526, 635, 684 u. ähnlich pass.

<sup>96</sup> 608.

<sup>97</sup> 562.

<sup>98</sup> Siehe oben Ziff. 1 mit Anm. 78. "*Tat-Mystik*" würde R.s Religiosität (wohl auch in seinem Sinne) am treffendsten kennzeichnen.

<sup>99</sup> 634.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. 688. Zum Kult "der deutschen Feldgrauen" vgl. oben Ziff. III 2 a.E. mit Anm. 56. Im Glauben, "mit dem Blute auch das göttliche Wesen des Menschen überhaupt zu verteidigen", ersetzt das Mysterium "des nordischen Blutes" "die alten Sakramente" (114).

<sup>101</sup> 482, 503, 513.

<sup>102</sup> 483f., 510f.

<sup>103</sup> 493, 511.

<sup>104</sup> 495, 508, 513.

<sup>105</sup> 485ff.

<sup>106</sup> 493. Vgl. oben Ziff. III 2 a.E.

<sup>107</sup> 526.

<sup>108</sup> 542.

<sup>109</sup> 520ff., 546ff., 559, 595ff. — Also genau die von *Dumézil* behauptete "*drei-funktionale*" Schichtung *indogermanischer* Gemeinschaften!

<sup>110</sup> 544.

<sup>111</sup> 502.

<sup>112</sup> 571, 574.

<sup>113</sup> 572, 591.

## BOOK REVIEWS

STROUMSA, G. G., *Another Seed*. Studies in Gnostic mythology. (Nag Hammadi Studies 24) – Leiden: Brill 1984, ISBN 90 04 07419 8. Gld. 64.-

Die unterschiedlichen Versuche, sich den Ursprüngen der Gnosis bzw. des Gnostizismus zu nähern, haben seit dem 19. Jahrhundert—abgesehen vom Kirchenvater Hippolyt—immer das nachbiblische Judentum dafür herangezogen. Gerade jüdische Gelehrte, die am besten über diese Seite zu urteilen vermögen, haben dies verschiedentlich getan (H. Graetz, M. Joel, M. Friedländer, G. Scholem). Die neuen Texte und erstmaligen gnostischen Originalquellen aus Nag Hammadi haben diesem Gesichtspunkt noch mehr Auftrieb gegeben und es stärker als vorher zur Gewißheit werden lassen, daß die Anfänge gnostischer Lehren irgendwie mit bestimmten frühjüdischen Traditionen zusammenhängen, zumindest ohne diese unverständlich sind. Es ist daher begrüßenswert, wenn von einem israelischen jungen Gelehrten dieses Thema in einer gründlichen Art und Weise erneut aufgegriffen worden ist.

G. Stroumsa, Religionshistoriker in Jerusalem, ist mit einem Vorläufer der publizierten Arbeit 1978 in Harvard bei G. MacRae promoviert worden. Im Unterschied zu manchen ähnlichen Studien aus früherer Zeit, hat sich Stroumsa auf ganz bestimmte, zentrale Bestandteile der "mythologischen" Überlieferung der Gnostiker konzentriert, die von der Forschung bis heute als "sethianisch" gelten (ohne daß damit für Str. ein Beweis für "Sethianer" als besondere Gruppe gegeben ist, 5). Dabei zieht er die Linien bis in die manichäische Überlieferung aus, läßt aber die valentinianische Gnosis weithin beiseite. Eine samaritanische Vermittlung der jüdischen relevanten Themen hält er dabei für nicht erweisbar (11f; die umfangreiche Arbeit von J. Fossum, die diese Hypothese erneut zu beweisen sucht, erschien erst 1 Jahr später im Druck: *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*, Tübingen 1985). Den relativ neuen Gesichtspunkt, den Str. stärker als bisher in den Vordergrund stellt, ist der Anteil, den die Gnostiker an der Exegese biblischer Texte haben, die auch für die jüdischen und christlichen Theologen eine crux bedeuteten, insofern sie von den Fragen nach der Herkunft des Bösen (vgl. Genesis 6,1-4), dem Stellenwert der Heilsgeschichte und der Rolle der Adamiten (bes. Seths) geleitet waren. Dabei läßt sich beobachten, daß die gnostische Behandlung solcher Themen eine Art 'reinterpretations' frühjüdischer Konzepte bieten, die wir vor allem aus apokryphen und pseudepigraphen

Texten kennen, aber auch bei Philo und in manchen Rabbinica wiederfinden. Die gnostische "Umwertung" ist dabei im Vergleich zur jüdischen und christlichen die radikalste. Auf diese Weise läßt sich ein gemeinsamer Hintergrund nicht nur von literarischen Texten, sondern auch von Problemstellungen her erkennen, die das klassische, statische Konzept von "Einfluß" oder "Nichteinfluß", Abhängigkeit oder nicht, außer Kurs setzen und durch eine stärker dynamisch-traditions- und problemgeschichtliche Sicht ersetzen.

Die Studie verfolgt die genannten Themen in drei Teilen: "From Origin of Evil to Origin of Righteousness" (15-70), "The Gnostic Race" (71-134) und "Echos and Repercussions" (125-168). Die Argumentation ist dabei oft sehr differenziert und versucht möglichst alle relevanten Texte heranzuziehen, so daß die Vielfalt der Belege mitunter den Zusammenhang zu zerstören droht. Der erste Teil geht von den jüdischen und häresiologischen Quellen aus und weist meines Erachtens überzeugend nach, daß Gen. 6, 1-4, auch Ausgang für die gnostischen Vorstellung vom Ursprung des Bösen aus der sexuellen Mischung von himmlischen und irdischen Wesen gewesen ist, darüberhinaus aber auch das bekannte gnostische Thema von den "verführerischen Archonten" (35-70) bestimmte. Allerdings muß Str. zugeben, daß im Einzelnen die Nachweise für direkte jüdische Vorbilder (z.B. für Norea und ihre Geschichte, 53f), nicht sicher sind, da die Heranziehung mittelalterlicher Quellen (Midraš Šemḥazai und Azael) dafür problematisch ist (was Str. durchaus zugibt: 167). Auch die Ableitung von Barbelo aus Barthenos, wie Epiphanius belegt, ist recht kühn (61f.). Man sollte das Verfahren wie es Str. recht erfolgreich anwendet, nicht zu sehr durch unbedingte Nachweise jüdischer Vorbilder oder literarischer Texte belasten: es genügt der Nachweis, daß gnostische Autoren gleiche Bibeltexte parallel zu anderen frühjüdischen Exegeten für ihre Zwecke benutzt haben, so daß die Problemgeschichte sichtbar wird.

Schwieriger ist es nämlich beim zweiten Thema, dem des "gnostischen Geschlechts" oder dem "Samen Seths", exakte jüdische Vorbilder—abgesehen von Seth selbst—nachzuweisen. Str. befaßt sich hier auch vornehmlich mit der "Offenbarung Adams an seinen Sohn Seth" (Nag Hammadi Codex V 5), die eine gnostische Heilsgeschichte entwickelt. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei der rätselhafte Passus, den Str. die "Hymne des Kindes" nennt (88-103). Der hier besungene Erlöser ist der verborgene "Große Seth", dessen wahre Erscheinung erst im 13. Königreich (Christentum) erfolgt und dadurch die 12 vorausgehenden Reiche (das sind die 12 Stämme Israels) als falsch entlarvt (91ff.). Allerdings ist auch die 13. Epiphanie noch dem Demiurgen Sakla verhaftet und bringt keine endgültige Erlösung (100). Str. setzt daher den Text in die Mitte

des 2. Jahrhunderts und versteht ihn als eine gnostische-baptistische Streitschrift gegen christliche Gnostiker, wie sie z.B. hinter dem "Evangelium der Ägypter" zu finden sind (103). Unleugbar ist der jüdische Geschichtsaufriß mit den 4 Perioden, wie wir sie auch aus anderen NHC-Texten kennen (103ff.). Auch für Einzelmotive können jüdische Vorbilder nachgewiesen werden (109ff.). Inwieweit der Versuch die "heilige Geographie" (115-123), wie sie mit dem Land Seiris, Sir, auftritt, mit dem Wohnort der "Sethiter" als einer real-topographischen Anspielung zu verbinden ist, bleibt für mich unsicher. Überhaupt ist das Problem der Sethiten dunkel: im Grunde haben die Gnostiker das Thema am entschiedensten aufgebracht und tradiert; daß sie dabei von jüdischen Quellen angeregt worden sind, ist gewiß, aber sie sind nicht mehr deutlich rekonstruierbar. Die rabbinischen Texte, deren chronologische Bestimmung oft übersehen wird (meist von Forschern, die der Gnosisforschung Vernachlässigung der Chronologie vorwerfen, ohne zu merken, daß sie selbst im Glashaus saßen), haben nur bedingten Aussagewert. Str. sieht auch hier ein Anknüpfen gnostischer Exegeten an Genesis 6, 1-4, weil, wie Josephus zuerst belegt (Ant. I, 69-71), diese Stelle unterschiedlich ausgelegt wurde: entweder sind die "Gottessöhne" Engel oder Gerechte; letzteres wurde vorherrschend und Josephus setzte sie den Sethiten der degenerierten siebenten Generation gleich. Auch hinter I. Henoch 85-90 ist dies hypothetisch greifbar (131f.). Jedenfalls ist die Sintflut eine Strafe für das Vergehen der abgefallenen Adamiten. Es ist nun durchaus nicht abwegig, hinter der Aufnahme dieser negativ beurteilten Geschichte der Sethiten, eine der bekannten gnostischen Protestexegesen zu sehen, für die ja auch Sodom und Gomorrha als gnostische Heilsorte umgedeutet wurden (Evangelium der Ägypter III, 60, 9-8). An den 3. Sohn Adams, der Kain und Abel ersetzte, haben sich vielerlei Spekulationen angeschlossen, zu denen auch die gnostischen gehören, die von dem "unbesiegbaren Geschlecht" Seths sprechen.

Im 3. Abschnitt geht Str. den Nachwirkungen der behandelten mythologischen Themen in den Hermetica, bes. dem in dieser Tradition stehenden Brief Omega des Zosimus (137-143) und den Manichaica (145-167) nach. Auch hier läßt sich ohne Zweifel jüdisch-gnostisches Erbe nachweisen, vor allem im Manichäismus, wie in letzter Zeit dank des Kölner Mani-Kodex zunehmend deutlich geworden ist. Mani kannte, wie Str. betont, jüdische Nebentraditionen, aber mit gnostischen Firnis bzw. gnostisch gedeutet (165ff.). Daß Mani aber auch die Sophiagestalt gekannt haben muß, läßt sich an einigen Zügen seiner "Mutter des Lebens" zeigen (vgl. meinen Beitrag in: Bryder, P. (ed.) *Manichean Studies: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manichaeism*, Lund 1988, 191-200).

In den abschließenden Bemerkungen (169-174) zieht Str. generell Bilanz für die Gnosisforschung. Da der Prozeß der Umdeutung des Engelfalls schon im Judentum vor der Gnosis im Gange war, steht diese hier in einer besonderen Erberelation. Davon sieht Str. auch das Thema der Historisierung in der Gnosis berührt, die nach ihm nicht erst in der Begegnung mit frühchristlichen Theologumena erfolgt sei, sondern schon mit der Aufnahme der jüdischen Heilsgeschichte im Zusammenhang mit der Thematisierung der Herkunft des Bösen (169). Es kommt aber hinzu, daß die Gestalt von Jesus Christus nach ihrer Aufnahme in die mythologische Soteriologie der Gnosis doch verändernd gewirkt hat, wie z.B. besonders deutlich in der mandäischen Überlieferung sichtbar, und die heilsgeschichtliche Dominanz in neue Bahnen lenkte, eben in die "christliche Gnosis". Fernerhin möchte Str. die "Sexualmythologie", die hinter der Exegese von Genesis 2 und Genesis 6 steckt, als Grundtenor der alten Gnosis auffassen, bevor sie zu einer Erlösungslehre wurde. Dafür wird Hippolyt (Ref. V, 6, 3f. Marcovitch p. 141) bemüht, aber hier steht dessen eigene Theorie Pate und nicht historisches Wissen. Richtig scheint mir daher nur die jüdische Wurzel exegetischer Probleme der Gnosis zu sein: die Gnosis verfolgt aus Protest eine Radikalisierung, die ich in der skeptischen Weisheit verankert sehen möchte (vgl. meine *Gnosis*, 2. Aufl. 300ff; engl. Übersetzung 280ff.). Eine christliche Vermittlung ist dafür unnötig wie Str. mit Recht feststellt (170). Ob eine Reduktion gnostischer Anfänge nur auf die Bibelexegese notwendig ist, bleibt für mich allerdings eine gewagte Hypothese, da ja das Bewußtsein der exegetischen Arbeit bestimmt gewesen sein muß von leitenden Ideen, die andererseits auch das Verhalten in dieser Welt bei diesem Prozeß mitsteuerte. Alle, die von Str. behandelten Themata (Verführung der Eva, die unvollkommenen "Göttersöhne", die himmlischen Urbilder von Adam und Eva, der Abstieg der Engel usw.) bilden meines Erachtens nur einen Teil der gnostischen Überlieferung, sicherlich einen wesentlichen, aber der "conflicting dualism", der der "hierarchical duality" von Gott und Schöpferengel gegenübersteht, ist doch eingebunden in eine Weltanschauung, die sich nicht bruchlos auf jüdisches Denken dieser Zeit zurückführen läßt. Das Kreisen um die "Erlösung der Seele" ist meines Erachtens ein festes credo früherer Gnosis gewesen (z.B. in der Simonianischen Überlieferung), die sich nicht ausblenden läßt. Exegese war eines der Mittel sich legitimierend der Tradition zu versichern, aber keinesfalls der alleinige Entstehungsgrund der Gnosis. Wenn Str. daher an anderer Stelle sagt: "die Gnosis erscheint so als eine der biblischen Traditionen innewohnende Versuchung, die Versuchung einer radikalen Lösung dieser Spannungen—oder soll man vielleicht sagen: dieser Widersprüche—in

der und durch die die Religionen leben'' (Judaica 44, 1988, 26), so ist dies nur unter der Voraussetzung eines eben von der offiziellen Überlieferung abweichenden Standpunktes zu verstehen.<sup>1</sup>

Ohne Zweifel verdanken wir dem Autor eine der anregendsten Studien zur Gnosisforschung aus letzter Zeit. Bedauerlicherweise ist außer der Bibliographie kein Stellenregister der zitierten bzw. diskutierten Quellen beigegeben worden; dies sollte bei einer Neuauflage auf jeden Fall nachgeholt werden.

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<sup>1</sup> Dazu hat sich Str. selbst näher in seinem Beitrag "Die Gnosis und die christliche »Entzauberung der Welt«" zu: W. Schluchter (ed.), *Max Webers Sicht des Christentums*, Frankfurt 1985, 486-508, bes. 489 und 499ff., geäußert.

SCHOLEM, Gershom, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, edited by R.J. Zwi WERBLOWSKY, translated from the German by Allan Arkush, The Jewish Publication Society—Princeton, University Press, 1987.

Die epochale wissenschaftliche Bedeutung von Gershom Scholems Klassiker *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala*, bisher nur in einer Auflage in deutscher Sprache erschienen (Berlin 1962), bedarf keiner Begründung mehr; man fragt sich eher, warum ausgerechnet dieses Standardwerk nicht früher dem englischsprachigen Publikum bekanntgemacht wurde (möglicherweise, weil es von den *opera magna* Scholems das auf den ersten Blick "wissenschaftlichste" ist und sich daher von den großen Verlagen nicht so leicht vermarkten ließ). Mit Recht schreibt der Herausgeber der jetzt endlich erschienenen englischen Übersetzung, daß es eine müßige Frage sei, welches der großen Werke eines großen Wissenschaftlers das größte ist, daß aber im Falle Scholems unter dem drei herausragenden *opera magna* (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*; *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*; *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala*) letzteres "in many ways... is the most impressive of all, for here Scholem dealt with a major yet enigmatic phenomenon in the history of Jewish spirituality... The wealth of source material marshalled, the penetrating philological accuracy with which it was analyzed, and the scope of historical insight with which it was evaluated all made this study... a *maximum opus*" (S. XI f.). Aufgabe des Rezensenten kann es daher nur sein, die Qualität der Übersetzung zu prüfen und die redaktionelle Arbeit im Verhältnis zur deutschen Erstausgabe zu würdigen.



Was die Übersetzung betrifft, so ist sie insgesamt flüssig und gut lesbar; dem Übersetzer ist es weitgehend gelungen, die außerordentlich komplizierte Sprache Scholems aufzuschüsseln und in verständliches Englisch umzusetzen. "Die Kunst, kurze Sätze zu schreiben", die Scholem selbst nicht zu seinen Haupttugenden zählt (Walter Benjamin/Gershom Scholem, *Briefwechsel 1933-1940*, hrsg. von G. Scholem, Frankfurt a.M. 1980, S. 255), hat der Übersetzer durchaus erfolgreich auf die deutschen Schachtelsätze Scholems angewandt. Man vergleiche etwa als beliebiges Beispiel "Diese Quellen, die nicht einheitlicher Art sind, waren aus dem Orient gekommen, wo ihre Entstehung im Zusammenhang sei es mit der Merkaba-Literatur, sei es mit anderer rein gnostischer Überlieferung, verständlich ist, während sie im Abendland rätselhaft wäre" (S. 109) mit "These sources, which are not homogeneous, came, from the Orient. It is easy to understand how they could have come into being there in regard to the Merkabah literature or to some other purely gnostic tradition; their birth in the Occident, on the other hand would be inexplicable" (S. 123). Sieht man einmal von dem etwas ungenauen "inexplicable" für "rätselhaft" ab, treffen diese drei englischen Sätze durchaus den Sinn des einen deutschen Satzes. Wirklich unpräzise Übersetzungen habe ich ganz selten gefunden. So ist etwa die Verkehrung der subjektiven Aussage Scholems "Ob die Hs. (sc. Nr. 218-21 der Sammlung Carmoly der Stadtbibliothek Frankfurt a.M.) noch existiert, ist mir fraglich" (S. 194 Anm. 37) in die objektive Feststellung "Whether the manuscript still exists is doubtful" (S. 220 Anm. 37) doppelt problematisch, weil bereits 1982 der erste Teil eines Kataloges der hebräischen Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Frankfurt a.M. erschien, dessen Vorwort mit dem Satz beginnt: "Die hebräischen Handschriften der StuUB Frankfurt am Main haben vollzählig und unbeschädigt den Zweiten Weltkrieg überdauert" (*Hebräische Handschriften*, Bd. VI, 1a, beschrieben von E. Róth und L. Prijs, Wiesbaden 1982, S. IX).

Der Herausgeber sah sich einer anderen Situation gegenüber als bei der Übersetzung und teilweise völligen Neubearbeitung von *Sabbatai Sevi*. Während er nämlich damals jede Änderung des Textes mit dem Autor absprechen konnte (und deswegen sehr frei mit dem Original verfuhr), war er jetzt, nach dem Tode Scholems, ganz auf sich gestellt. Er entschied sich dafür, den Text bis auf ganz wenige Ausnahmen von eigenen Eingriffen freizuhalten und nur die Ergänzungen und Änderungen einzuarbeiten, die er in Scholems—mit leeren Blättern durchschossenem—Privatexemplar der deutschen Fassung vorfand. Auf diese Weise enthält die englische Übersetzung die Addenda und Corrigenda, die Scholem selbst von ca. 1962 bis kurz vor seinem Tode 1982 für wert erachtete zu

notieren. Das neue Material wurde sowohl in den Textcorpus als auch (vorzugsweise) in die Anmerkungen eingearbeitet. Es ist nicht gekennzeichnet; dagegen sind die wenigen ergänzenden Bemerkungen des Herausgebers in eckige Klammern gesetzt und mit den Initialen (R.J.) Z.W. versehen.

Den Umfang des im Verhältnis zur deutschen Fassung neuen Materials kann man sich in etwa verdeutlichen, wenn man die Zahl der Anmerkungen vergleicht ("in etwa" deswegen, weil damit weder die Ergänzungen im Text erfaßt sind noch die innerhalb von vorgegebenen Anmerkungen): Kapitel I: 86 statt 82 Anmerkungen; Kapitel II: 234 statt 219; Kapitel III: 320 statt 295; Kapitel IV: 250 statt 230 Anmerkungen. Inhaltlich beziehen sich die Ergänzungen (die, getreu den genannten Prinzipien des Herausgebers, in der 1. Person gehalten sind) auf eigene, inzwischen erschienene Arbeiten Scholems, auf neue Belege, die Scholem in Handschriften gefunden hatte sowie, weitaus überwiegend, auf Literaturnachträge und Auseinandersetzungen mit der Sekundärliteratur. Letztere zeichnen sich durch den umgeschminkt polemischen Ton aus, den wir von Scholems Publikationen kennen, vgl. etwa "Israel Weinstock... made some assertions that are completely without foundation. ...In the sequel I shall ignore Weinstock's publications... as they are based on wrong assumptions and offend against all scholarly methods and criteria" (S. 40 Anm. 66) oder "The alleged acquaintance of R. Abraham's son David with the *Zohar*, argued by A.I. Katsh... is a product of sheer imagination, unsupported by even a single shred of evidence" (S. 233f. Anm. 70).

Die Vorteile der vom Herausgeber gewählten Editions Methode liegen auf der Hand. Der Leser kann sicher sein, ausschließlich Scholems authentische Meinung vor sich zu haben. Interessant ist etwa, was Scholem nach seinem Buch *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (1965) zur Gnosis-Diskussion zu sagen hat: "The discussion as to what exactly is to be understood by 'gnosis' has gained in prominence in scholarly literature and at conferences during the last decades. There is a tendency to exclude phenomena that until 1930 were designated gnostic by everyone. To me it does not seem to matter greatly whether phenomena previously called gnostic are now designated as 'esoteric', and I for one cannot see the use or value of the newly introduced distinctions (for example, gnosis-Gnosticism and the like)" (S. 21 Anm. 24). Eine der wenigen Revisionen vorheriger Standpunkte Scholems betrifft die Datierung des *Sefer ha-Temunah*, das Scholem in der deutschen Fassung aufgrund der Fehldeutung eines Zitats bei Abraham Abulafia in die erste Hälfte des 13. Jh. datierte und damit dem kabbalistischen Zentrum in Gerona vor der Komposition des *Zohar* zuschreiben konnte (S. 408). Aus einer Anmerkung in

der englischen Fassung (S. 460f. Anm. 233) geht hervor, daß er sich inzwischen von den Argumenten seiner Schüler und Kollegen M. Idel und E. Gottlieb überzeugen ließ und das Buch "around 1300", also nach dem *Zohar*, datierte. Diese Spätdatierung hätte eigentlich Konsequenzen für das Kapitel über die Lehre von den kosmischen Zyklen (*shemittot*) und ihre Eintragung in die vor-zoharische Geroneser Kabbala gehabt (S. 460ff.), doch ließ der Herausgeber den Text unverändert, zumal er sich auf die Bemerkung Scholems stützen kann: "There is, however, no gainsaying that the writings of the Gerona school do indeed propound for the first time the doctrine of the *shemittot*, albeit in a simpler form" (S. 461 Anm. 233). Ob damit allerdings die Lehre von den *shemittot*, in welcher Form auch immer, für die Geroneser Schule gerettet ist, wird sich noch zeigen müssen.

Die erklärte Absicht, soweit wie möglich Scholem selbst zu Worte kommen zu lassen, bringt freilich auch einige Nachteile mit sich, die der Herausgeber offenbar bewußt in Kauf genommen hat. Bei manchen veralteten oder doch inzwischen umstrittenen Ansichten hätte man sich dennoch etwas entschiedenere Eingriffe (in eckigen Klammern) des Herausgebers gewünscht. So wird S. 24 Anm. 31 zwar in einem auf Scholem zurückgehenden Zusatz auf die kritische Edition der *Re'uyot Yehezqel* durch I. Gruenwald hingewiesen, doch heißt der Text dort, wie bei Scholem üblich, weiterhin *Re'iyot Yehezqel*, obwohl Gruenwald gerade in der zitierten Edition auf diese falsche Schreibung eingeht. Zum *Sefer Yesira* wäre ein Hinweis auf die Arbeiten von P. Hayman angebracht gewesen (vgl. S. 25 Anm. 34). *Pereq Shirah* wird heute nicht mehr so unbefangen für die Hekhalot-Literatur reklamiert, wie dies Scholem tat (S. 61 Anm. 19); desgleichen wird man *Sefer ha-Razim* kaum noch "undoubtedly" in die talmudische Periode datieren (S. 106 Anm. 99). Muß S. 211 Anm. 19 der Aufsatz von G. Quispel immer noch nach dem "offprint I have before me" zitiert werden? Was bedeutet die Stellenangabe "section 107a" für ein Zitat aus dem im Appendix von *Jewish Gnosticism* publizierten Text (S. 317 Anm. 243)? Manchmal scheinen sogar handschriftliche Fehler Scholems übernommen worden zu sein. So erscheint der Autor von *Maimonidean Criticism and the Maimonidean Controversy 1180-1240* als D.T. und als D.J. Silver (S. 369 Anm. 7; S. 408 Anm. 98 bzw. S. 404 Anm. 88; S. 406 Anm. 94). Zur Disputation von Barcelona wären inzwischen andere Veröffentlichungen zu zitieren als Graetz und C. Roth (S. 383 Anm. 47). War es nicht möglich, die Ch. Wirszubski zugeschriebene Erkenntnis über das Reuchlin-Zitat (S. 440 Anm. 176) zu verifizieren?

An manchen Stellen ist der Gebrauch der eckigen Klammern nicht klar. Von wem stammt etwa der in eckige Klammern gesetzte Zusatz S.

385 Anm. 52, der im deutschen Original fehlt? S. 406 Anm. 94 findet sich ein in eckige Klammern gesetzter Zusatz innerhalb einer *neuen* Anmerkung. Der Satz S. 406 unten/S. 407 oben ist als ganzer neu eingefügt, geht also wohl auf Scholem zurück; worauf bezieht sich dann aber das in Anführungszeichen gesetzte Stück? Insgesamt wäre es wahrscheinlich konsequenter und benutzerfreundlicher gewesen, wenn *alle* Veränderungen gegenüber der deutschen Ausgabe (sei es durch eckige Klammern sei es durch anderen Satz) gekennzeichnet worden wären.

Einige technische, für den Benutzer aber nicht unwichtige Details, sind in der deutschen Ausgabe besser als in der englischen. So etwa die von den Zwischenunterschriften der Kapitel genommenen lebenden Kolumnen-Titel, die das Auffinden einzelner Stellen erleichtern; in der englischen Fassung werden nur die Überschriften der vier großen Kapitel verwendet. Ganz unerklärlich ist die Anlage des Registers in der englischen Ausgabe. Zahlreiche wichtige Namen und Termini, die in der deutschen Ausgabe aufgeführt werden, fehlen in der englischen, andere sind ganz lückenhaft (vgl. nur "Abraham bar Hiyya": die deutsche Ausgabe hat 11 Belege, die englische einen einzigen, nämlich S. 126, wobei er dort aber schon S. 62 erwähnt wird).

Die genannten Monita schmälern in keiner Weise den Wert des Buches und die Leistung des Übersetzers und des Herausgebers. Vor allem dem Herausgeber gebührt unser Dank dafür, daß er die undankbare Arbeit der Redaktion auf sich genommen und nach *Sabbatai Sevi* ein weiteres Standardwerk Scholems einem breiteren Leserkreis zugänglich gemacht hat.

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HOFFMAN, Frank J., *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism*—Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, xii + 126, Rs 75, ISBN 81-208-0211-x

Hoffman perceives, from the outset, in this revised form (replete with misspellings and references to non-existent preceding passages) of his doctoral thesis the "need for scholars to do for Buddhism and other religions what philosophers of religion have been doing for Christianity in presenting conceptual problems" (p. 7) and "in terms of methodology, to eliminate several obstacles which some scholars (of Buddhism) have thought made an understanding of the content (of the texts) impossible" (ibid). And as a result, he is able, in a mere 120 or so pages, to answer all those irksome imponderables that have been troubling Buddhist

scholars for more than a century—viz. personal identity and rebirth, *anattā*, the fourfold negation, the existence of the Tathāgata after death and whether parinibbāna equals extinction, and so on.

Where we have all been going wrong over the years is in our perverse attention to factual detail, not to mention our misguided belief that a thorough knowledge of the Pali language would be of advantage in determining an answer to those questions.

Such niceties are to be abandoned in the Hoffman method, which proceeds as follows: (1) first simplify the problem beyond all recognition, then (2) isolate an aspect of it, (3) quote (preferably out of context) someone who has had something to say on that aspect, (4) misconstrue those remarks and then criticise them, and (5) thereafter establish, in the face of such an “unsound position”, the superiority of one’s own solution of the problem now correctly perceived (always remembering that, should the going get difficult, one can always take cover behind a philosophical smokescreen in terms of  $P_1$  undergoing  $dukkha_1$  at  $T_1$  being not the same as  $P_2$  undergoing  $dukkha_2$  at  $T_2$ ).

As a result of these tactics, a good many household names in Buddhist Studies are sullied, including E. J. Thomas, Rune Johannson, Edward Conze, Padmasiri De Silva and, last but not least, K. N. Jayatilleke; whilst I myself am not immune from such an attack in Chapter 6. And sullied with an arrogance that is quite unbelievable, Hoffman lamenting, for instance, that unfortunately Jayatilleke’s attendance at some of Wittgenstein’s lectures does not appear to have helped him (p. 83).

It soon becomes apparent, despite the glowing testimony in the book’s Foreword, that Hoffman, unlike all the above mentioned scholars, has no proper knowledge of either the Pali sources or the Pali language itself. He claims to elucidate the “Buddhism of the five Nikāyas” (p. 1), though in so doing fails to cite any reference to thirteen of the fifteen books of the Khuddakanikāya; whilst those passages that are quoted are all translations by another hand. (His contention that he is expounding the content of the Nikāyas without reference to their commentaries (p. 5) rings rather hollow without some way of demonstrating that the translations he uses contain no silent commentarial interpolations).

His ignorance of the Pali language is demonstrated by his method of first consulting the *English-Pali Dictionary* to find the Pali equivalent of an English term and then consulting the *Pali-English Dictionary* for references to that term in the text(s) under consideration. If no such reference is found (as he claims it is not in the case of ‘proposition’ (p. 15)), it may safely be concluded that the early Buddhist had no such concept: “In fact, I find no occurrences in early Buddhism of the terms for proposition listed

in A. P. Buddhadatta's *English-Pāli Dictionary*, viz., *kattukamyatānāpāna*, *pakāsana*, and *mūladhamma*'. Which leaves the Pali specialist crying out from his wilderness of philosophical imprecision: but what of the extremely common term *attha*, which often has this very meaning, especially when contrasted with *vyāñjana*—i.e. what is *meant* as opposed to the way of saying it?

Similar shrieks of agony may be heard to accompany Hoffman's etymology of *sacchikaroti*: "The crucial word in Pāli, *sacchikatvā* ('verified', 'seen') takes an emphatic (*yo*) form here as *sacchikaraṇīyo* ... *Sacca* means 'true' or 'correct' (it does not distinguish between propositional/ontological), and *katvā*, 'made' or 'established' " (p. 94f). For *sacchikaraṇīyo* is no "emphatic (*yo*) form" but simply the adjectival use of the future passive participle; and is, in any case, not derived from *sacca* at all. Indeed, it would be very hard to explain how *sacca* could be transformed into *sacchi-* (even given Hoffman's misspelling of *sacca* on p. 13 as *saccha(-nāma)*); and as anyone with any knowledge of Pali must know, *sacchikaraṇīyo* is derived from *sa* + *akkhi* + *karoti* (Skt *sākṣāt kṛ*), that is, (it is something) that is to be rendered (*karaṇīyo*) as if with (*sa*) eyes (*akkhi*), i.e. to be realised at first hand or for one to bring oneself face to face with. All of which might well render it a possible contender in certain empiricist circles, despite what Hoffman says.

It is hardly worth mentioning the absurd—indeed, some might say, blasphemous—conclusions reached through such a methodology. In his final chapter, discussing the "deathless" (*amataṃ*) quality of nibbāna, Hoffman displays a complete ignorance of the importance played by *amṛtam* in the preceding Vedic and Brāhmaṇic traditions. Foisting the ideas of his doctoral supervisor onto the Buddhist summum bonum, Hoffman instead asserts that what is meant by the deathless quality of nibbāna when applied to the Tathāgata is simply "to deny that the word '*mata*' ('dead', opposite of 'amata') applies to the *Tathāgata*", in the sense that it is impossible for him to experience death, since to experience something requires that he be alive (p. 114f).

Seemingly, we are, in all seriousness, expected to believe that *this* is why the Buddha, following his vow at the feet of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, spent countless, wearyful kalpas bringing to perfection those qualities that would eventually allow him to lead others to enlightenment, viz. that (like Nāgasena) he might:

"display the ninefold treasure of the Teaching of the Conqueror, point out the Dhamma-path, bear aloft the Dhamma-torch, erect the Dhamma-sacrificial-post, and sacrifice the Dhamma-sacrifice; stretch out the Dhamma-banner, erect the Dhamma-emblem, sound forth

the Dhamma-conch, beat the Dhamma-drum, roar his lion's-roar, thunder the thunder of Indra and, by thundering his sweet tune and enveloping them with the network of lightning-flashes of his supreme knowledge, drench the entire world with a huge downpour of the Deathless-Dhamma, heavy with the water of compassion'' (Miln i 21f).

All this, just so they wouldn't know they were dead when they died!

Buddhism may consider itself lucky that it has so far been spared what philosophers of religion have apparently been doing for Christianity; whilst true Buddhist scholars will no doubt prefer their present obstacles to Hoffman's imposed solutions.

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## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CULT OF SILVANUS

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Silvanus, the Roman god of agriculture, woods and boundaries, enjoyed a wide popularity during the first few centuries of the Principate, to judge from the over eleven hundred inscriptions and hundreds of statues, reliefs and other objects vowed to him.<sup>1</sup> Scholars, however, have viewed Silvanus' appeal as limited exclusively to men.<sup>2</sup> I will argue that the divinity certainly appealed to women, even though they were not as visible and active in his cult as men. Underrepresentation of women in itself is hardly unusual and does not necessarily imply the existence of any sort of sexual taboo.

There are few clear examples of sexual restriction for reason of religious scruple in Roman religion. The Mithraic mysteries were closed to women perhaps because of the club-like structure of the cult rather than for any ritualistic requirement.<sup>3</sup> Religious *collegia*, including those of goddesses, rarely had female members.<sup>4</sup> Pseudo-Lucian (*Erotes* 42) vaguely alludes to all-female mysteries. Perhaps he had in mind Bona Dea who excluded men from at least some of her rites, certainly from her December festival, notoriously desecrated by P. Clodius in 62 B.C. A large number of dedications from men to this most staunchly feminine of all Rome's goddesses suggests, however, that total sexual prohibition was rarely enforced completely.<sup>5</sup>

Few other Roman cults were dominated entirely by one sex or the other, although some deities forbade the participation of men or women at particular times or in certain places, or had aspects appealing to masculine or feminine taste. For example, women could not sacrifice to Hercules at the *Ara Maxima* in Rome, and men (including the Pontifex Maximus) were denied access to the inner sanctuary of the temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum and the shrine of Diana on the Vicus Patricius in Rome.<sup>6</sup> From the Greek world we know of the exclusion of men or women from cults in certain locations, but not others.<sup>7</sup> For this reason it has been suggested that exclusionary practice was attached not to the divinity, but to the site of veneration.<sup>8</sup>

The two sexes, of course, had different spiritual needs. *Genii* and *Junones* watched over men and women respectively. Mothers invoked Fortuna Primigenia to ensure the fertility of their offspring; soldiers looked to Mars for success in warfare. Women in particular were devoted to certain goddesses, such as Fortuna (especially under the epithets *Virginalis* and *Muliebris*), Venus Verticordia, Pudicitia and Mater Matuta (except female slaves). These cults did not exclude one sex so much as they attracted the other. They involve the selectivity of the dedicant, not of the deity.

There are two generally conflicting bodies of evidence regarding female participation in the cult of Silvanus. A few Roman authors suggest some restriction against women, while inscriptions show that the god had many female adherents. A disparity between literary and epigraphic sources also confounds our understanding of sexual exclusion in the worship of Bona Dea.<sup>9</sup> In regard to Silvanus, inscriptions are the more reliable source, not to minimize the importance of literature. They are often closer to real life—and thus more representative of the humble individuals who venerated the god—and in sheer numbers dwarf the casual references to the divinity in ancient authors.<sup>10</sup> At any rate, literary texts are not so clear about Silvanus' attitude toward women and may merely indicate that only particular rites were limited to men.

The earliest indication of an interdiction against women in Silvanus' cult appears in the early second century B.C., when the Elder Cato (*De Agri Cultura* 83) referred to the exclusion of women in a sacrifice made to both Mars and Silvanus for the protection of cattle on the farm:<sup>11</sup>

Votum pro bubus, uti valeant sic facito. Marti Silvano in silva interdus in capita singula boum votum facito. Farris L. III et lardi P IIII S et pulpae P IIII S, vini S III, id in unum vas liceto coicere et vinum item in unum vas liceto coicere. Eam rem divinam vel servus vel liber licebit faciat. Ubi res divina facta erit, statim ibidem consumito. *Mulier ad eam rem divinam ne adsit neve videat quo modo fiat.* Hoc votum in annos singulos, si voles, licebit vovere.

Although there is no reason to doubt Cato's words or question the reading of the passage, the text does not imply that women were prevented from sacrificing to Mars-Silvanus on all occasions, only in this particular instance when the two deities were invoked together "pro bubus." The reason for the prohibition of women

thus could lie in the nature of the sacrifice, its setting, or even the joint invocation with Mars, whose war-like side was not popular with females. But Mars' cult did not normally exclude women elsewhere.

Almost three hundred years later Juvenal (6. 447) criticized a woman for sacrificing a pig to Silvanus. That the writer mentioned the practice at least may indicate that it occurred. Whether such female actions were socially unacceptable at some level depends, of course, on how much faith one has in Juvenal as a representative of Roman thinking at the time. Perhaps the main object of the satirist's criticism was the pig sacrifice rather than the deity involved. Yet Juvenal's scholiast, writing in the late fourth century, interpreted the writer's words as meaning nothing other than the total exclusion of women from the worship of Silvanus:

Silvano mulieres non licet sacrificare.

A plaque found in Rome, which announces the prohibition of women from entering a man's pool by command of Silvanus, may also refer to sexual restriction (*CILVI* 579):

Imperio Silvani/ni qua mulier velit/in piscina virili/descendere si minus/ ipsa  
de se queretur/hoc signum/sanctum est.

Silvanus was invoked surely because of his partiality towards males, but there is no indication that women were denied access to a sacred area or the right to worship the deity. On the contrary, the situation seems quite secular—as far as that word can be used when speaking of antiquity—unless the pool somehow played a role in religious rites.<sup>12</sup> More at the heart of the matter is the traditional, prudish desire to keep the sexes separated. Such segregation in public baths is well attested.<sup>13</sup> Here we may have an example from the private sector where Silvanus acts as the defender of female *castitas*.

In his treatise *Civitas Dei* (6.9) Augustine portrays Silvanus as a cruel god who not merely shut out women from his rites, but preyed on them at night while they were helpless in childbirth:

...(Varro) tamen mulieri fetae post partum tres deos custodes commemorat adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circuire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis, ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare, quod neque arbores

caeduntur ac putantur sine ferro, neque far conficitur sine pilo, neque fruges coacervantur sine scopis; ab his autem tribus rebus tres nuncupatos deos, Intercidonam a securis intercisione, Pilumnum a pilo, Deverram ab scopis quibus diis custodibus contra vim dei Silvani feta conservaretur. Ita contra dei nocentis saevitiam non valeret custodia bonorum...

Although the venerable and reliable Varro is the stated source for this tidbit of information, possibly Augustine does not present an accurate description of Silvanus. That the Church Father was not very informed about this deity is conceivable; that he purposely distorted whatever he knew also cannot be excluded. Still, he must have based his story on some kernel of truth which can now no longer be recovered, for he seems to have had some crude concept of Silvanus' three-fold nature as *Agrestis*, *Domesticus* and *Orientalis*, described by the Gromatici Veteres.<sup>14</sup> To guard pregnant women, three men, representing the tutelary spirits Intercidona, Pilumnus and Deverra, were accorded the tasks of striking the threshold of the house with an ax, pestle and broom respectively. Augustine's claim that these symbols of agriculture (*culturae signa*) prevented the god's entry into the home is quite odd. Silvanus, although concerned with the uncultivated woods, was more closely tied to agriculture and the household. The night setting of the passage also causes some problems. Although the notion of Silvanus as a deity of the night surfaces in the description of his (or Faunus'?) role in the Battle of the Arsian Forest, Cato (*De Agri Cultura* 83) specified that the sacrifice to Mars-Silvanus be made only during day-light hours (*interdius*).<sup>15</sup>

In another passage of the *Civitas Dei* (15.23) Augustine explains how *Silvani* and *Panes* (*Fauni* in some manuscripts), called *incubi*, often attack and sexually harass women in their sleep:

Silvanos et Panes (Faunos in some manuscripts), quos vulgo incubos vocant, improbos saepe extitisse mulieribus et earum appetisse ac peregissee concubitus.

Augustine alone accuses Silvanus of attacking women, causing bad dreams during the night, and displaying anti-agricultural and anti-domestic traits. Rather, Faunus consistently possesses these malevolent attributes.<sup>16</sup> But, even though the Christian writer may have confused the two divinities, we cannot offhandedly cast aside the possibility that he accurately preserves a very early text,

perhaps reflecting a time when Silvanus exhibited pronounced misogynistic traits.

Another Christian source, Pseudo-Ambrosius *Epistolae* 2.12, gives a different view of the female role in the cult. The text may suggest that women not only venerated Silvanus privately, but also participated in feasts held by male-dominated *collegia*.<sup>17</sup>

Ipsa autem dum reverteretur ad urbem Mediolanensium, incurrit homines idololatrias Silvano sacrificantes in itinere, quam cum vidissent, deponentes eam de vehiculo, hortabantur secum epulari. Cumque illa, resistens, diceret: Christiana sum, non licet mihi de Silvani vestri sacrificiis manducare, statim illi haec audientes, tanta eam caede mactaverunt, ut vix eam seminecem sui homines ad Mediolanensium urbem perducerent, ita ut intra triduum migraret ad Christum.

The passage narrates the fate of Valeria, mother of Saints Gervasius and Protasius, who happened upon men sacrificing to Silvanus. When asked to worship along with them she refused because she was a Christian, not because of her sex. Thus, possibly women were not always forbidden to join in worship, but required an invitation from men.

Although some evidence suggests that Silvanus was a pro-male or, in the case of Augustine, an anti-female deity, women were welcomed as devotees in some capacity since they formed a significant proportion of Silvanus dedicants. Inscriptions erected by women amount to forty-nine in a corpus of just over eleven hundred. That number becomes more noteworthy when dedications with anonymous or unspecified donors are eliminated from the counting. In all, there are about eight hundred inscriptions which give the name of a dedicant. Accordingly, about 6.1% of inscriptions with specified dedicants and 4.4% of the entire corpus make some mention of women. This percentage is not insignificant, given that only 18.3% of all inscriptions to Isis, who particularly addressed feminine needs, are from women.<sup>18</sup> A large number of female dedications on stone are known only for the Magna Mater, Bona Dea, Diana and Ceres. Women simply were not active in erecting inscriptions, whether because of lack of money, illiteracy or social conditioning. R. MacMullen notes that female dedications amount to 10% or less of the inscriptions recorded in *CIL* for Eastern gods in the Gallic, Rhineland and Danubian provinces.<sup>19</sup>



In this perspective, the relatively low percentage of female Silvanus dedicants is not surprising.

An epigraphic profile of Silvanus' female adherents is worth constructing. Thirty-one inscriptions were erected by women alone, eight by wives with their husbands, eight by women and men of unspecified relationship, one by a father and daughter, and one by a mother and son. In addition, other dedications to the god were erected for the health of women.<sup>20</sup> The geographical range of female inscriptions covers the entire Western empire, with a large concentration of offerings in Pannonia where the Silvanae, the god's female attendants, were especially popular with women. Indeed, over twenty percent of all female dedications to Silvanus include the Silvanae.

Silvanus' female dedicants, although from diverse walks of life, were mostly of rather humble social class: Theodora, the only clearly identifiable slave (*CIL* XIV 4327); [A]diuta, a freedwoman of a private citizen (*AE* 1930 82 bis); Chia, the wife of a freedman of the emperor (*CIL* VI 297); Cornelia Ampliata and Fe[sce]nia Astice, wives of freedmen *seviri Augustales* (*CIL* XIV 309; *BASD* 30 (1907) 118, no. 3928a); Faustina, the wife of Indagius, a native (or slave?) at Lambaesis (*AE* 1968 644); Aurelia Severa, the daughter of a legionary serving in Pannonia (*CIL* III 3393); Vibia Pacata, the wife of a centurion stationed in Northern Britain (*AE* 1964 175); Valeria Profutura, wife of a Roman citizen (*CIL* VI 690); Julia Sporis, wife of Hymetus, an *aedituus* of the Temple of Diana *Planciana* in Rome (*AE* 1971 31); and Fortunula, the spouse of a *sacerdos Martis* with Roman citizenship (*AE* 1899 47). Few belonged to the aristocratic classes: Crispiana, a *clarissima* (*CIL* XII 1726); and Claudia Proculina, the wife of a *legatus Augusti pro praetore* and *consul designatus* (*AE* 1967 571 = *CIL* VIII 2585).

Most of these women had Latin names; others were of Greek origin or adopted Greek names: for example, Calybe, Theodora, Aeburia Artemesia and Chia.<sup>21</sup> Very few seem to have had obvious non-Roman roots, although ethnicity is difficult to determine from onomastic criteria alone.<sup>22</sup>

Women sometimes record the reasons for their offerings to Silvanus. In most cases these are similar to men's professed claims: to fulfill a vow (*CIL* III 14359<sup>30</sup>), for the health of a son (*CIL* IX

1552), to honor the dead (*CIL* V 822), to record the reconstruction of a shrine (*CIL* XIV 4327). Many women had sound justification for venerating an agricultural/pastoral deity. In areas where male-dominated slave labor was scarce women comprised a high percentage of the field hands (exactly how high is not known), as in many Mediterranean countries today. Still, most female, as well as male adherents mentioned on Silvanus inscriptions lived in cities and did not practice farming.<sup>23</sup> For them Silvanus' appeal lay in the distance or inaccessibility of the countryside. Lurking behind many of these urban offerings is a sentimental nostalgia for the rural world and a longing for a simpler, quieter way of life. By the imperial period Silvanus was rarely invoked as protector of fields and flocks, but served as an outlet for the stress of urban life and a constant reminder of real or imagined country roots.<sup>24</sup>

The large number of dedications from women cannot be explained through the practice of *interpretatio Romana*. In the regions where the majority of female dedications come—Italy, Pannonia and Dacia—Silvanus is not once identified with local native equivalents and his epithets are never derived from indigenous languages.<sup>25</sup> Even the *Silvanae*'s immense popularity in Pannonia is not immediately traceable to the Celtic cult of the *Matronae*. Thus Silvanus does not seem to be hiding an indigenous god who might have been more luring to women.

Nothing in the epigraphic record suggests that women acted any differently than men in cult worship. Surely because of their interest in home and family women had a particular liking for Silvanus *Domesticus*, an epithet found mostly in Dacia and Pannonia; but that aspect of the cult was also very popular with men. Male and female also seem to have experienced equal closeness with the deity. One woman even offered a *sacrum* to the god on account of a dream (*ex viso*), in which Silvanus presumably appeared to her (*AE* 1971 31).

A strong reason for rejecting the notion of Silvanus as a solely male-oriented deity is the existence of a feminine side of his personality, the *Silvanae*.<sup>26</sup> These woodland goddesses, represented on reliefs as Nymphs in a peaceful relationship with Silvanus, are never shown chased or sexually molested in the way Pan and the Satyrs harassed the Maenads and the Nymphs. A deity invoked

with female companions and depicted harmoniously with them would not be hostile to women.

Of the twenty-six dedications to the Silvanae and Silvanus, nine were vowed by women, one by a father and daughter, and the remainder by men.<sup>27</sup> Nearly 39% of all Silvanae inscriptions were erected by women, indicating the incredible appeal this aspect of the cult had for their sex, at least in Pannonia where most of the evidence is concentrated.

The often tersely worded dedications do not answer many questions about female involvement in Silvanus' worship. If women were excluded from certain aspects of the cult, in what capacity were they permitted to participate? One woman helped to contribute funds for the erection of a shrine to Silvanus at Ostia (*CIL* XIV 4327). Was this a common practice? Did women attend the banquets in honor of Silvanus which male-run *collegia* administered, as is perhaps suggested by the above passage of Pseudo-Ambrosius? Or was female involvement in worship on a more individual level? The bulk of female dedicants were probably excluded from *collegia*, for none are found as members of these organizations. At any rate, Silvanus' veneration centered more around the family and the individual than the *collegium*.

Women may even have formed part of a priestesshood of Silvanus. A joint dedication to Jupiter Hammon and Silvanus *Barbarus* at Carthage lists a certain Sempronia Salsula and Valeria Paulina as *matres sacrorum*, along with fourteen or fifteen men designated as *sace[r]dotes dei Barbari Silvani* (*CIL* VIII 245 19a-b). The African inscription evidently involves Silvanus' identification with a Punic or Berber deity and might be discounted as hard evidence that women formed part of any organized priestesshood of the Roman Silvanus. The only other instance of a female devotee designating herself as *mater* probably refers to family instead of religious office.<sup>28</sup> But one should not cast aside the possibility that some women took on a very active role in Silvanus' cult, even in instances when *interpretatio Romana* was not at play.

Far from being solely a male oriented deity, as some evidence suggests, Silvanus attracted women also. The worship of the Silvanae shows that this ancillary cult definitely appealed to women. They erected shrines, attended sacred feasts (if the

testimony of Pseudo-Ambrosius is credited), and may even have formed a priestesshood to administer rites. Their many dedications show that Silvanus could address feminine concerns.

Women, of course, played a less visible role in the Silvanus cult compared to men, a reflection of the enormous social and economic barriers they faced in society in general and in the system of Roman paganism in particular. The state cult—to which Silvanus did not belong—was dominated by men who monopolized most religious offices. Private family worship, in which Silvanus played a considerable part, was closely controlled by the eldest male, the *paterfamilias*. Also, religious *collegia*, almost always directed and patronized by men, became increasingly important during the imperial period. We tend to see fewer female dedicators because women generally had little money for the erection of expensive inscriptions, statues and buildings. They may even have had a lower level of literacy and thus were reluctant, or unable to leave a written testimony of their *pietas*. Also contributing to the relative inactivity of women was the moral pressure not to draw attention to themselves.

Given the many barriers to female participation in religion, the number of women who venerated Silvanus is impressive and suggests that his cult was sexually indifferent, at least during the second and third centuries A.D. when most of the inscriptional evidence dates. The lure of the forbidden alone cannot have attracted so many female dedicants. If there had been a taboo against women, it either was not often enforced or applied only to particular rites, such as those described by Cato and Juvenal.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of Silvanus dedications, iconographical representations and literary references and a bibliography on his cult see P. Dorcey, "The Cult of Silvanus in the Roman World," (Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University 1987). Note the following abbreviations: *AE* = *Année Epigraphique*; *AIJ* = V. Hoffiller and B. Saria, *Antike Inschriften aus Jugoslawien. Heft I, Noricum und Pannonia Superior* (Zagreb 1983); *BASD* = *Bulletino di archeologia e storia dalmata*; *BudReg* = *Budapest Régiségei*; *CIL* = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*; *DE* = E. de Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane*; *EE* = *Ephemeris Epigraphica*; *GZMS* = *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u*

*Sarajevu*; IDR III, 3 = I. Russu, *Inscriptiile Daciei Romane* (Bucharest 1984) III, 3; RIU II = L. Barkóczy and S. Soproni, *Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns* (Budapest-Amsterdam 1976); RIU III = L. Barkóczy and S. Soproni, *Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns* (Budapest-Bonn 1981).

<sup>2</sup> See G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Munich 1912) 214; A. von Domaszewski, "Silvanus auf lateinischen Inschriften," *Philologus* 61 (1902) 10-11; A. Brelich, "Osservazioni sulle 'esclusioni rituali'," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 22 (1949-1950) 8-9; Idem, *Tre variazioni romane sul tema delle origini* (Rome 1976) 68-72; A. J. Pfiffig, *Religio Etrusca* (Graz 1975) 299; and R. E. Palmer, "Silvanus, Sylvester and the Chair of St. Peter," *PAPhS* 122 (1978) 222.

<sup>3</sup> For the only known female devotee of Mithras see S. Panciera, "Il materiale epigrafico dallo scavo di Santo Stefano Rotondo," *Mysteria Mithrae*, U. Bianchi ed. (Leiden 1979) 101.

<sup>4</sup> For women in religious *collegia* see J. P. Waltzing, *Etude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romains* (Louvain 1900) vol. 4, 256.

<sup>5</sup> For the cult of Bona Dea see G. Wissowa, "Bona Dea," *RE* 3 (1899) 686-694; D. Vaglieri, "Bona Dea," *DE I* (1886) 1012-1015; and H. Brouwer, "Bona Dea" (Diss. Utrecht 1982), who gives a full collection of the total evidence, including inscriptions. Brouwer indeed confirms that, quite contrary to the official, mainly literary reports on Bona Dea's exclusively feminine nature, there are many votives to the goddess from men.

<sup>6</sup> According to Propertius 4.9, and Plutarch *Quaestiones Romanae* 60 and 90, women could not worship Hercules at the *Ara Maxima*. Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.12.28, believed that the hero's cult excluded women throughout all Italy; Gellius 11.6.1, reported that they abstained completely from sacrifices to Hercules. However, female adherents of Hercules are known from Italy and throughout the empire: e.g. *CIL* II 728, 2816; VI 286, 297, 327, 337. For Vesta see: H. Hommel, "Vesta und die frühromische Religion," *ANRW* I, 2 (Berlin-New York 1972) 397-420; and M. Beard, "The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins," *JRS* 70 (1980) 12-27. For Diana's exclusion of men in the Vicus Patricius see Plutarch *Quaestiones Romanae* 3.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., women were forbidden to enter the grove of Ares at Geronthrai (Pausanias 3.22.7) and, with the exception of Thracian women, to worship Hercules at Erythrai (Pausanias 7.5.8). Men were excluded from the cults of Ares at Tegea (Pausanias 8.48.4), and Dionysos at Brasiae (Pausanias 3.20.3) and from the festival of the Thesmophoria in Athens. For a thorough listing of Greek cults with local sexual taboos see L. R. Farnell, "Sociological Hypotheses Concerning the Position of Women in Ancient Religion," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 7 (1904) 70-94.

<sup>8</sup> Brelich, art. cit.

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that Silvanus was worshipped with Bona Dea, but always with other deities: with Diana (*AE* 1913 187), Diana and the Silvanae (*CIL* III 10394), and Hercules (*AE* 1946 93). Brelich, art. cit., 10f., elaborating on Wissowa's theory that Silvanus was the private counterpart of the public cult of Faunus, draws an unlikely correlation between the exclusion of males from the cult of Bona Dea-Fauna, and that of females from the worship of Silvanus-Faunus. Silvanus and Faunus, although sometimes confused in ancient literature, cannot be identified with one another.

<sup>10</sup> Only a handful of senators, equestrians and decurions are known as adherents of the god, which may explain why Silvanus was never incorporated

into the elite controlled state calendar, and never given a public temple and priest in Rome.

<sup>11</sup> For the general restriction of women from religious duties see *De Agri Cultura* 143.

<sup>12</sup> The *signum* itself was *sanctum*, not the pool. Baths of Silvanus, known from Saepinum (*CIL* IX 2447) and mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus (28.4.19), probably did not have any ritualistic function, if they are to be identified at all with the divinity instead of with an individual bearing that *cognomen*.

<sup>13</sup> *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Hadrian* 18: "Lavacra pro sexibus separavit;" *Marcus Aurelius* 23: "Lavacra mixta summovit;" *Alexander Severus* 24: "Balnea mixta Romae exhiberi prohibuit, quod quidem iam ante prohibitum Heliogabalus fieri permiserat."

<sup>14</sup> K. Lachmann *Die Schriften der römischen Feldmesser* (Berlin 1848) 302, 13-19: "Omnis possessio quare Silvanum colit? quia primus in terram lapidem finalem posuit. Nam omnis possessio tres Silvanos habet. Unus dicitur domesticus, possessioni consecratus. Alter dicitur agrestis, pastoribus consecratus. Tertius dicitur orientalis, cui est in confinio lucus positus, a quo inter duo pluresve fines oriuntur. Ideoque inter duo pluresve est et lucus finis."

For this passage see D. Briquel, "Le pilon de Pilumnus, la hache d'Intercidona, le balae de Deverra," *Latomus* 42 (1983) 265-276 (with bibliography). Of the three minor deities, only Pilumnus is known elsewhere (e.g., Vergil *Aeneid* 9.3-4). Briquel claims that the distinction among the three *Silvani* in the *Gromatici Veteres* cannot be likened to that among the three divinities opposed to Silvanus in *Civ. Dei* 6.9, since the differentiation in the former passage is spatial, while in the latter it is functional. But the *Silvani Domesticus*, *Agrestis* and *Orientalis* of the *Gromatici Veteres* can easily be assigned domestic, agricultural and boundary functions respectively. Palmer, art. cit., 222, in fact sees a correspondence between the two texts which, however, he argues is a bit defective: Deverra, the goddess of the broom, and Intercidona, the spirit of wood cutting, should not be matched with Silvanus *Agrestis* and *Orientalis* respectively. But Deverra does correspond to Silvanus *Agrestis* since, as Augustine explains, grain is gathered with brooms. Then it is perfectly reasonable that Intercidona be opposed to Silvanus *Orientalis* in the sacred grove, while Pilumnus, the god of the pestle (or, in other words, food production), be juxtaposed with Silvanus *Domesticus* in the home.

<sup>15</sup> Livy 2.7.2: "Silentio proximae noctis ex silva Arsia ingentem editam vocem; Silvani vocem eam creditam." Valerius Maximus 1.8.5, follows Livy almost verbatim, but there is some confusion over the divinity in this episode. Plutarch *Publicola* 9.4, does not specify the name of the god; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 5.16.2-3, credits Faunus with the divine pronouncement in battle.

<sup>16</sup> There are many indications of Faunus' violence toward women. Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.12.24, records how Faunus' daughter resisted the sexual advances of her own father; Horace *Odes* 3.17, described Faunus as a "Nympharum fugientum amator," in less euphemistic terms the god is accused by Servius of *stuprum* and even of raping animals (*Aeneid* 6.775); see Ovid *Fasti* 2.303, for the story of Faunus' attempted rape of Hercules' girl friend; for Faunus' hostility to women in general see Brelich, *Tre variazioni*, 71. On the other hand, our only source for Silvanus' sexuality shows he was interested in the male, not the female: Servius on *Georgics* 1.20.

Faunus' connection with the night is also undeniable. Lucretius 4.581f., spoke of the noises of the night-wandering Fauns; Calpurnius Siculus 1.15f., referred to the *nocturna gaudia* of Faunus, whom he called *nocturnus pastor*; in Ovid Faunus gives

an oracle at night to Numa (*Fasti* 4.662), and cannot be seen at midday (*Fasti* 4.762); in Vergil *Aeneid* 7.102f., the god delivers a prophecy at night, while in Pliny *NH* 30.84, *Fauni* are contrasted with *nocturni di*.

Many authors describe Faunus as a causer of nightmares. Pliny *NH* 25.29, prescribed a plant to be picked at night as a cure for the nighttime delusions caused by Fauns; Ovid *Fasti* 4.661f., described the *somnia nigra* which Fauns bring on; other sources specifically call Faunus an *incubus*, the term given to Silvanus by Augustine *Civ. Dei* 15.23; Servius *Aeneid* 6.775, and Isidorus *Origines* 8.11.104.

<sup>17</sup> *Patrologia Latina* 17 (1879) 823-824. For the date of this text see L. Ruggini, *Economia e società nell'Italia annonaria* (Milan 1961) vol. 1, 87, note 230; vol. 2, 282, note 206; and F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose* (Oxford 1935) 319-320. The document unquestionably postdates St. Ambrose, but was written before the time of John of Damascus (675-749) who first quotes it.

<sup>18</sup> S. K. Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Graeco-Roman World* (Leiden 1975) 129.

<sup>19</sup> *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven-London 1981) 117. Note also that only about 8% of inscriptions to Jupiter Dolichenus were dedicated by women: P. Merlat, *Répertoire des inscriptions et monuments figurés du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus* (Paris 1951); M. Hørig and E. Schwertheim, *Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni* (Leiden 1987).

<sup>20</sup> By women alone: *CIL* VI 581, 31003; *AE* 1971 31 (Rome); *CIL* IX 1552; *CIL* V 706, 817, 822, 3303 (Italy); *CIL* XII 1571 (Narbonensis); *CIL* III 3498, 3672, 3963, 4304, 10460, 11001, 11173-11175, 13428, 14089, 14359<sup>30</sup>; *AE* 1930 82 bis; *AE* 1950 118; *AE* 1965 124; *AJZ* 467-468; *BudReg* 11 (1932) 380 (Pannonia); *CIL* III 7860 = *IDR* III, 3, no. 131; *AE* 1914 104 = *IDR* III, 3, no. 121 (Dacia); *AE* 1964 175; *AE* 1979 384b (*tabella defixionis* written by a certain Saturnina who replaced *Marti Silvano* with *Mercurius* on one side of the tablet; on the other side presumably the same women invoked Silvanus) (Britannia).

In addition, perhaps Silvanus' name can be substituted for that of Saturn on a female dedication from Volubilis in Mauretania Tingitana (*AE* 1955 207).

By husbands and wives: *CIL* VI 297, 667, 690 (Rome); *CIL* IX 3526 (Italy); *AE* 1899 47 (Africa); *AE* 1967 571 = *CIL* VIII 2585; *AE* 1968 644 (Numidia); *BASD* 30 (1907) 118, no. 3928a (Dalmatia). By women and unspecified males: *CIL* VI 592; *AE* 1971 31 (Rome); *CIL* XIV 309, 4327; *CIL* V 5118 (Italy); *CIL* XII 1726 (Narbonensis); *CIL* VIII 24519a-b (Africa); *CIL* III 4164 (Pannonia). By father and daughter: *CIL* III 3393 (Pannonia). By mother and son: *CIL* V 822 (Italy). For health of women: *AE* 1977 692 (by husband; Dacia); *CIL* VII 1038 (by *libertus*; Britannia).

<sup>21</sup> *CIL* V 817; *CIL* VI 297, 581; *CIL* XIV 4327.

<sup>22</sup> L. Barkóczy, "The Population of Pannonia," *AArchHung* 16<sup>3-4</sup> (1964) 321, regards Garginia Procula (*CIL* III 14359<sup>30</sup>) as a native.

<sup>23</sup> To give some example of Silvanus' urban appeal, note that on inscriptions the god ranks second only to Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the cities of Rome and Aquincum, and is the most frequently encountered divinity in Carnuntum.

<sup>24</sup> Of the god's over seventy epithets, surprisingly few have any agricultural significance: *sator* (*AE* 1922 67) and *messor* (*CIL* III 9867; 14970; *GZMS* n.s. 6 (1951) 51) are the only indications of Silvanus invoked to ensure the planting and harvesting of crops. Other titles which refer to country life in any way are also rare: *agrestis* (Vergil *Georgics* 2. 493-494; Lachmann, *Feldmesser*, 302, 13-19), *campester* (*AE* 1967 405 = *IDR* III, 3, no. 220), *erbarius* (*CIL* III 3498) and *Lar agrestis* (*CIL* VI 646).

<sup>25</sup> For Silvanus' purely Roman character in Dacia see P. Dorcey, "The Cult of Silvanus in Dacia," *Athenaeum* 66 (1988) 131-140; in Pannonia see A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia* (London-Boston 1974) 250-252. Silvanus, however, is equated with local gods frequently in Africa, Britannia and Gallia Narbonensis.

<sup>26</sup> These goddesses appear with Silvanus on reliefs, especially in Pannonia: see, e.g., *BudReg* 3 (1891) 70. Nymphs, to be distinguished from Silvanae (a purely epigraphic term), are associated with Silvanus also in literature and on inscriptions: Vergil *Georgics* 2. 493f.; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1. 192-193; Lucan *De Bello Civili* 3. 402; *CIL* XI 3289, 3294 (Italy); *CIL* III 1958, 9754 (?), 13187; *BASD* 30 (1907) 118, no. 3928a; *GZMS* 39 (1927) 257 (Dalmatia); *AE* 1983 711 (*Nymphae loci*) (Belgica); *AE* 1927 58 (?) (Moesia).

<sup>27</sup> Women alone: *CIL* V 817, 3303 (Italy); *CIL* III 4304, 10460, 14089; *AE* 1965 124; *AIJ* 467-468 (Pannonia); *AE* 1964 175 (Britannia). Father and daughter: *CIL* III 3393 (Pannonia). Men: *AE* 1946 197 (Tarracoenensis); *CIL* III 10077 (Dalmatia); *CIL* III 4441-4442, 4534, 10394, 10847, 13475, 13497, 14355; *EE* 4 (1881) 474; *AE* 1937 209; *AE* 1957 164; *AE* 1978 657 (Pannonia); *CIL* III 12367; *AE* 1955 67 (Moesia).

<sup>28</sup> *CIL* III 3672. Silvanus dedicants also sometimes designate themselves as *patres*, but this term probably does not carry a religious connotation, as in the cult of Mithras: *AE* 1944 119 = *RIU* II, 457 (probably reads *pa(tronus)* rather than *pa(ter)*, since a *collegium* is mentioned); *AE* 1967 405 = *IDR* III, 3, no. 220.



LIVING WATER  
MEDIATING ELEMENT IN  
MANDAEAN  
MYTH AND RITUAL<sup>1</sup>

MAJELLA FRANZMANN

Like many another isolated group attempting to live strictly according to ancient traditions, the Mandaeans have experienced difficulties in their contact with modern education and technology. E. S. Drower outlined some of these difficulties in 1937<sup>2</sup> and reports since then have not been optimistic.<sup>3</sup> More recently the position of Mandaean communities in the battle-zone<sup>4</sup> of the Iran-Iraq conflict has only served to exacerbate their situation. H. D. Sox warns too of potential disaster for the communities in the awareness of the Iraqi government “that the bitumen-laden swamp homeland of the Mandaeans and the ‘Marsh Arabs’ sits upon rich petroleum deposits”.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most telling sign of the decline of the Mandaean community and its increasing ignorance of its own language and cult is the sending by the present Ganzibra in Baghdad, Shaikh Abdullah, of a priest candidate to Kurt Rudolph in Marburg to be educated in Mandaic language and literature.<sup>6</sup> Such a situation indicates even more clearly to the scholarly community what little time there may be in which to study this group as a living religion.

For the most part, study of the Mandaeans has concentrated on questions of their origin and history, the origin and development of cult, language, and so on. Some years ago J. J. Buckley, in his study of the relation of myth and ritual in the Mandaean *masiqta* (the so-called death mass ceremony), criticised the scholarship which has by and large neglected the relationship of Mandaean myth and ritual:

“...students of Mandaicism continue (more or less tacitly) to regard the myths and the rituals as essentially unrelated. Generally, where a concern with ritual emerges, mere description and comparative interests take the lead. Attempts to render the rituals of Mandaicism meaningful within the frameworks of the religion’s mythological thought are still scarce.”<sup>7</sup>

This paper will take up Buckley's concern and investigate the relation of myth and ritual in the Mandaean maṣbûṭā (baptismal ritual) by focussing on the element of living water. It will show that, both in the mythological concepts about living water and in the baptismal ritual, living water serves as the source of life and as the connecting link between the world of light and the earthly world.

G. Widengren's study of Mandaean baptism as an enthronement ritual does touch on the relationship of myth and ritual.<sup>8</sup> However Widengren takes basically a comparative stance, investigating baptism in relation to coronation rituals. What is proposed in this paper is an "internal" investigation, limited to the mythology and ritual of the Mandaeans themselves.

*I. Living water (mia hiiā<sup>9</sup>): the mythology<sup>10</sup>*

Themes: water, light and life; water as connection between the world of light and the earth.

Living water originates in the world of light. The various cosmogonic accounts in *GR* differ and it is not an easy matter to be clear, for example, about the exact origin of living water or its place in the order of creation. *GR* XV 379, 3-8, for example, has:

Upon the world of light was life,  
and from life came water.  
From life came water,  
and from water came radiance.  
From radiance came light,  
and from light came the uthras.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, in *GR* III 73, 19-26, life comes from water by the power of the king of light:

The great fruit came,  
and in it came the Jordan.  
The great Jordan came,  
living water came.  
The gleaming, sparkling water came,  
and out of the living water came I, life.<sup>12</sup>

Although there is confusion of detail in the accounts, the close association of life, light and water is clear.

Over against the living water of the world of light is the black water (mia siauia<sup>13</sup>) of the world of darkness.<sup>14</sup> However the living

water is superior to the black water, being older than the darkness (*GR* III 75, 23).

The black water is said to encircle the earth after its creation by the demiurge Ptahil (*GR* 174, 37-38). It is into these waters that a thin stream of living water from the heavenly Jordan is poured by Mandā dĥaijē.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the water becomes tasty, “so that the children of men drink it and become like the great life” (*GR* XI 266, 35-37).<sup>16</sup>

The narrative about the sending of living water into the earthly world is found a number of times in the mythology with some variation of detail. *GR* XV, for example, describes how living water is sent into the earthly world with Šilmai and Nidbai as guardians.<sup>17</sup> The water complains because it is suffering and its power diminishing (308, 31-32) but the two guardians instruct it to be at peace since it is in the world to issue the call of life, to spread radiance, to give support to souls and offer them living baptism and healing (310, 9-18).

There is explicit reference to water as the connecting link with the world of light in *GR* XV 354, 4-13, especially 12-13:

Thus the water gushed forth  
and the connection of this world was established.<sup>18</sup>

The concept of the transformation of the waters of the earth by the heavenly living water is reiterated in the indiscriminate use by the Mandaean of the word *iardna*/jordan both for the living water of the world of light and for earthly rivers/flowing waters.<sup>19</sup>

I would suggest that the sending of heavenly living water into the waters of the earth and the close association of the concepts of life, light and water are most important aspects regarding salvation in the Mandaean mythology. The presence of the heavenly Jordan in the earthly jordan establishes the connection between the world of light and the earthly world and this means that there is a readily available source of life in the world. If the water from the heavenly Jordan had not been poured out, the waters of the earth would have remained black and without life as they were after the creation (*GR* V 174, 37-38), and the souls of the Mandaeans would remain imprisoned within the realm of darkness.

*II. Living water: the mašbūtā ritual*<sup>20</sup>*1. Use of water in Mandaean ritual*

Much of Mandaean ritual makes use of water, for example, with immersion (mašbūtā, masiqta, ordinations, weddings, ritual slaughter); lustration (rišāmā, ṭamāšā, cleansing of the mandi, foot-washing in the ordination ceremony, washing of the knife before and after ritual slaughter); and drinking (mambūhā in the mašbūtā and masiqta, hamrā [wine and water mixed] in the wedding ceremony).

The immersion section of the mašbūtā, or some condensed form of it, is integral to the major Mandaean rituals and the importance of baptism/immersion in Mandaean life in general is apparent from the colloquial use of the term šubba (sing. šubbi [šba = to baptize, immerse, dip in; to dye]) to denote the Mandaeans.<sup>21</sup>

*2. The mašbūtā ritual in general*

Baptism for a Mandaean should ideally take place every Sunday and at certain feasts, especially the five days of Panja. It is also required after events such as marriage, birth, touching the dead, illness, making a journey, and after sin, some major sins such as theft, murder or adultery demanding more than one baptism.<sup>22</sup>

The ritual may be divided into two major sections: the actions associated with the immersion that takes place in the water and the actions on the river bank thereafter including the anointing with oil, the ritual meal of bread and water, and the exorcism prayers.

*3. Mythological content in the mašbūtā ritual prayers*

The prayers for the mašbūtā have a heavy mythological content on a number of levels. *CP* 1, for example, provides parallel liturgical settings in both the heavenly and earthly realms. The prayer opens with cosmogonic detail followed by a short narrative about one without a crown who meets the Seven (planets). The subsequent description of a heavenly crowning ceremony is followed in the final part of the prayer by the instructions for the earthly liturgical action of the priest's setting on of his turban.

Other prayers contain a kind of mythological commentary on the earthly ritual action. In *CP* 13, the priest recites as he descends into the jordan that he is accompanied by the mythological helpers Šilmai and Nidbai, Hibil, Šitil and Anuš.

There are also prayers which contain only mythological detail and one must make the connection oneself to the earthly ritual. Thus in *CP* 4 what is actually described is the action of the 'uthras (beings of light) in their škintas (heavenly dwellings) who dedicate the wreath on their head to the tree of radiance and hang it upon the tree. This prayer is recited by the priest as he dedicates his myrtle wreath.

Perhaps the most explicit indication of the thorough interconnectedness of mythological element and earthly liturgy appears in the instructions in *CP* 30 concerning the prayer to accompany the kušta (ritual handclasp, signifying the giving of truth) before the priest shares the meal of bread and water:

“*Kušta* make you whole my brother-<sup>2</sup>uthras! The communion of the living hath been performed in the manner in which <sup>2</sup>uthras perform it in their *škintas*. Fragrant is your perfume, my brother-<sup>2</sup>uthras, (for) within ye are full of radiance.”

One has the impression that the barriers separating the world of light and the earth have disintegrated, that there is no longer a certain heaven and earth but a merging of the two in the experience of the ritual.

#### 4. *CP* 12-21: the immersion section of the mašbūtā ritual

Themes: water, light and life; water as connection between the world of light and the earth.

a) Water, light and life are closely linked.

Images of light are associated with the jordan in *CP* 12 (the creation of a škinta [dwelling] in the house of light in connection with the opening of the jordan), in *CP* 18<sup>23</sup> (the great Jordan of the First Life which is all afire with glory flaming in the Tanna), and in *DMašb* 51, 11-19 [commentary on the prayers at the beginning of the ritual action in the water] (the coming of radiance and light and the illumination of the Jordan).

*CP* 9 refers to “the great baptism of Light”, a concept reiterated in image of the garment of radiance (*CP* 19 and 92).

With regard to the connection between water and life, on the simplest level it is that the water is life-sustaining, as is implied in the prayer for the setting of the wreath, *CP* 19, which describes the tendrils of the wreath which do not wither nor lose their leaves.

More importantly, however, the jordan is presented as a life-creating element. *CP* 18 speaks of the opening of the waters whereby life is established by its own waters. This is followed by a brief narrative in which Life establishes living things in the waters.

*CP* 14 has a narrative about Yawar who raises up ‘uthras (“vines of life”) in the Jordan by the power of his staff of water. Similarly the souls to be baptised will be raised up and behold the Great Place of Light and the everlasting Abode.

Outside of the baptismal ritual texts this concept is found even more strongly in passages such as *ATS* II, 32 where the water of the priest’s phial is said to be semen, or in the two variations of a legend reported by Drower of ‘Nišbai’s conception of John the Baptist by drinking water from the Jordan,<sup>24</sup> a legend substantiated in part by *J* 115, 10-18 and *HG* 5, 2-5.

b) Water is the connection between the world of light and the earth.

On the simplest level, the water is a witness or a pass for the soul on its journey to the world of light (*CP* 21).

On a deeper level, the jordan is the agent for/the means by which that movement is carried out.

*CP* 18 contains a three-part formula concerning the souls who are abandoning destruction for construction, error for truth, and the abode of fear for the Place of Light.

We have already indicated the close link between water, light and life in the ritual and the mythology. Both light and life are explicitly described as ways/guides for the soul returning to the world of light.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that the same role is implicitly given to water in *CP* 18:

“...I will take his hand and be his saviour and guide to the great Place of Light and to the Everlasting Abode.”<sup>26</sup>

From the discussion above, it seems reasonable to suggest that the living water which is life, which emanates from the heavenly

region, is a means by which the baptised soul returns to the world of light, whether the journey is realised in the baptism ritual<sup>27</sup> or whether it is a promise for the journey after death.<sup>28</sup>

At the deepest level, the water of the jordan is the connection between the world of light and the earthly world because, in the ritual, it becomes more effectively the water of the heavenly Jordan. I would suggest that this concept is found most convincingly in the ritual prayers for the opening (ptaha d-iardna) and establishing (qaiamta d-iardna) of the jordan.

In the ritual as we have it at present, the opening of the jordan occurs at *CP* 12 before the descent of the priest into the water; the establishing occurs at *CP* 20, after the baptisands have gone up to the bank and the priest has dipped his bowl and phial in the water. The priest rises to the bank after saying the establishing prayer.

Segelberg suggests that with the opening prayer the stream of living water is supposed to flow, prior to the rites connected with the water.<sup>29</sup> Rudolph assumes that the opening of the Jordan has something to do with a cultic reminiscence. He describes the priest in the pool who commands a clearing of the channel into the mandi-pool, so that the water may be truly living/flowing.<sup>30</sup> At the same time he suggests that the opening is a symbolic action which serves to make clear that living water must be flowing and not “cut off”.

Although, according to the mythology, the earthly jordan already contains living water from the heavenly Jordan, it is also true that the mythological narrative speaks only of a thin stream of living water descending into the black waters. Moreover, we have the report of Drower on the Mandaean belief that only one part in nine of the earthly water is heavenly, spiritual water; the other is tahma, a lifeless fluid.<sup>31</sup> It seems logical that for the purposes of baptism the heavenly Jordan should be encouraged to flow in its full potential in the earthly jordan.

The other lesser purification rites with water (rišāmā and ṭamāšā) do not contain explicitly the opening and establishing prayers. However, there is some similarity to the opening concept in the introduction to the formula for the ṭamāša: “...loose upon me the forces of the yardna, let them come (upon me)”.<sup>32</sup> Yet there seems no necessity to exorcise nor establish the waters thereafter. One is left with the question the waters thereafter. One is left with the

question of why there is such care concerning the water in one ritual and not in another.

The prayer for the establishing of the jordan asks that the jordan be gentle<sup>33</sup> and bring healing to those baptised. In the ritual prayers then, if the establishing prayer asks the jordan to be calm, the opening prayer may be reasonably interpreted as implying some kind of activation of the jordan as we have suggested above.

One has to be careful however considering the possibility of corrupted texts. Other sources which give details of a baptismal ritual appear to contradict, to some extent, what is contained in the ritual prayers.

GR IV 144, 29-145, 10, narrates the heavenly baptism of Hibil-Zīwā before his descent into the world of darkness. When the Jordan sees the radiance, light and splendour of Mandā dHaijē, and the olivestaff of living water, it begins to play and leap and swirl about (145, 2-4), and it must be commanded to be still so that Hibil-Zīwā can be baptised (145, 5-10).<sup>34</sup> The narrative of this section of the rite concludes: "Then Mandā dHaijē established the baptism. He went up out of the Jordan..."<sup>35</sup> (145, 22-23). The calming of the Jordan occurs before baptism, not afterwards as in CP 20.

DMašb 55, 8 describes the calming of the Jordan after the filling of the phial, as in CP 20, but implies in the commentary on CP 21 that the Jordan becomes active once more with/after this prayer:

"And when Ayar-Rba and all the sixty kings his brethren rise (*out of the jordan*) and recite From the jordan I arose, then all jordans swirl, sport, dance and remain not quietly in their beds." (DMašb 55, 13-16)

The detail in the three accounts may be compared in the following table:

CP 12-21, 82	GR V 144, 29-145, 10	DMašb 51-55
opening of the jordan	(Jordan active before the ritual)	
	calming of the Jordan	



<i>CP</i> 12-21, 82	<i>GR</i> V 144, 29-145, 10	<i>DMašb</i> 51-55
baptism	baptism	baptism
filling of the phial + <i>CP</i> 82	<i>CP</i> 82	filling of the phial
establishing/ calming of the jordan + <i>CP</i> 20		calming/ sealing of the Jordan
	establishing of baptism	
		<i>CP</i> 82 + signing kušta on the Jordan
		<i>CP</i> 20
ascent + <i>CP</i> 21	ascent	ascent + <i>CP</i> 21 + jordans active as this section of the ritual ends

The basic pattern of action for *CP* is: opening/activating the jordan + baptism + establishing/calming the jordan; for *GR*: (Jordan active before the ritual) + calming the Jordan + baptism + establishing baptism;<sup>36</sup> and for *DMašb*: baptism + calming the Jordan + jordans active as the ritual in the water ends. When all three accounts are considered there seems no clear correlation between the actions of the jordan and the actions of consecration/opening and deconsecration/establishing.<sup>37</sup> In discussing the so-called qiamta (establishing) prayers,<sup>38</sup> Rudolph summarises the problem of this section of the ritual:

“In reflection on the difference between ‘establishing’ and ‘loosing’, one can say that ‘establishing’ corresponds to ‘making effective’, and ‘loosing’ to ‘making ineffective’, thus consecration and deconsecration; yet in our present sources this difference is strongly obliterated and not explicitly expressed.”<sup>39</sup>

From the limited context of the ritual prayers, the most logical solution seems to be that with the opening the water becomes more fully the heavenly Jordan, and with the establishing/calming the water returns to its normal state; that is, eight parts earthly and one part heavenly water.

As we have interpreted it, opening the Jordan means increasing its potential as a life-giving source. In this open state it is much more dangerous to the user so that, for the purposes of the rite, it must be bound in order to limit the sphere of influence of the force within it.<sup>40</sup> So may we understand the purpose of the binding prayers which also serve for exorcism, prayers which are accompanied by the priest's drawing of three circles on the water with his staff. The establishing of the jordan at the close of the immersion section of the ritual lessens the life-force potential of the jordan and, by corollary, lessens the danger for those who subsequently come into contact with it.

The danger is not only contained within the water. The candidates for baptism are in transition from marginal status to full communion with the world of light; that is, from darkness to light, from corruption/sin to life. In the transition they are more susceptible to the dangers of the water.<sup>41</sup>

With regard to transitional states, the anthropologist Mary Douglas writes:

"Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable... The danger is controlled by ritual which precisely separates him from his old status, segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry to his new status. Not only is transition itself dangerous, but also the rituals of segregation are the most dangerous phase of the rites."<sup>42</sup>

I would suggest that in the *maṣbūtā* the segregation of the individual is most pronounced, both symbolically and in reality, at that stage in the ritual in which each person moves alone into the water to be baptised.

The danger of this section of the ritual then is three-fold: the soul is in a transition; the earthly waters are in transition, having been opened to the full potential of the heavenly Jordan; and both the soul and the water meet at this point where both are in a dangerous marginal state. Although we speak here of danger, this is also to be understood as the state of most potential for both soul and water. It is at this stage that the life of the world of light is mediated to the soul.

*Conclusion*

Much remains to be investigated. There is, for example, the question of other mediators. In his study of the masiqta, Buckley suggests that it is the priests who are the mediators, earthly impersonators of the heavenly light-beings, capable of crossing the boundaries between earth and the world of light.<sup>43</sup> Space does not permit of a detailed critique of this theory but it should be noted that the two lesser purificatory rites with water, rišāmā and ʔamāšā, are performed efficaciously by the layperson without an officiating priest.

There are further questions, some of which really require discussion with the Mandaean community: for example, what the mediation of life to the soul means; how the Mandaeans understand their changed status after the ritual of baptism; what the garment of light means in terms of their continuing earthly physical existence; what kind of dynamic is at work in the meeting of so many elements in marginal states—the water, the soul, and even the seemingly indissoluble merging of heavenly and earthly rituals. If the world of light is indeed present at the earthly baptism, so that earthly and heavenly baptism are one,<sup>44</sup> then one has to ask where, in fact, the Mandaean would situate himself/herself in the action of baptism.

There is disagreement among scholars as to the extent of the soul's sharing in the world of Light. Rudolph, in agreement with Drower, seems to suggest it may be no more than a heavenly vision, a view which is contrary to the theory of Reitzenstein that baptism is a heavenly journey.<sup>45</sup>

Given the intermingling of heavenly and earthly imagery in the ritual prayers, it seems possible to argue that some kind of heavenly existence is enjoyed by the soul, if only for the duration of the baptism ritual, even while he/she still lives physically on the earth. That this could be possible, according to the Mandaean mind, may be more readily understood from the basis of the Mandaean attitude to history and time where the primordial events of the world of light are all important and the historical events of this world of little consequence.<sup>46</sup>

Although so many questions remain, two points have become clear in this investigation; firstly, that the Mandaean ritual of baptism is tightly woven with Mandaean mythology, and secondly,

that the element of living water, according to both the baptism ritual and the mythology, mediates the life of the world of light to those in the earthly realm, thus bridging the barrier between the worlds of light and darkness.

Because in the *Urzeit* living water was sent as a kind of life-line into the earthly waters, baptism creates life in the Mandaean soul and thus gives the soul a means of sharing in the world of light and of being in communion with those who have already died and gone to that world. There are other effects of Mandaean baptism—forgiveness of sins, purification, blessing and healing (*CP* 7, 9, 18, 23, 24...), yet these are only corollaries surely to the binding of the soul and the world of light.

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#### ABBREVIATIONS

- ARR* (Alma Rišaia Rba); E. S. Drower, *A Pair of Naṣōraean Commentaries (Two Priestly Documents). The Great "First World" and The Lesser "First World"*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963. Reference by page and line number.
- ATS* E. S. Drower, *The Thousand and Twelve Questions (Alf Trisar Šūialia). A Mandaean Text edited in Transliteration and Translation*, (VIOF 32), Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960.
- CP* E. S. Drower, *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959. Reference by the number of the prayer and its accompanying instructions/explications.
- DMašb* (Dīwān Mašbuta dHibil Zīwā); E. S. Drower, *The Haran Gawaita and the Baptism of Hibil-Ziwa. The Mandaic Text Reproduced Together with Translation, Notes and Commentary*, Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953. Reference to both texts is by page and line number.
- DN* (Dīwān Nahrwātā); K. Rudolph, *Der mandäische "Diwan der Flüsse"*, (ASAW.PH 70/1) Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982.
- GL*
- GR* (Ginzā, left/right side) in M. Lidzbarski, *Ginzā. Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer*, Göttingen/Leipzig: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1925. Reference is by book, page and line number.
- HG* (Haran Gawaita); cf. *DMašb*
- J* M. Lidzbarski, *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*, Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1915. Reference is by page and line number.

- MD E. S. Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
- ML M. Lidzbarski, *Mandäische Liturgien*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970 (reprint of Berlin, 1920).

<sup>1</sup> Paper presented by the author as the Charles Strong Junior Scholar 1988 to the 13th Annual Conference of the Australian Association for the Study of Religions, Brisbane, 1-4 Sept, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> E. S. Drower, *The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran. Their Cults, Customs, Magic Legends, and Folklore*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962, (reprint from Oxford, 1937), [abbrev. *MII*], 15-16, 19 n. 12.

<sup>3</sup> In 1978, K. Rudolph (*Mandaeism*, (IoR, Section 21: Mandaicism), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978, 1) estimated the number of Mandaeans to be about 15,000.

<sup>4</sup> The Mandaeans are situated, for the most part, in the marshes of the lower Euphrates and along the rivers and channels of the Tigris and in the Khuzistan along the Karun river, as well as in the cities of Baghdad and Basra.

<sup>5</sup> H. D. Sox, "The Last of the Gnostics", in *King's Theological Review* VI, 2, (1983), 43-44, esp. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Reported by K. Rudolph to the author in personal correspondence, 27.7.88. Rudolph reestablished communications some eighteen months ago with the Iraqi Mandaeans with whom he had lost contact shortly after the beginning of the war in the Gulf. About the community in Iraq he writes:

"Ich vermute, daß die Situation der Gemeinde kritischer ist, als sie in den Briefen an mich zum Ausdruck kommt. Die Zensur ist sicherlich sehr streng. Wahrscheinlich gibt es nur noch einen Ganzibra... Er ist ein sehr modern denkender Mandäer, der sich darüber klar ist, daß die Gemeinde nur weiter überleben kann, wenn sie gewisse Anpassungen vornimmt. Er ist auch derjenige gewesen, der im Unterschied zu seinem Vorgänger in Bagdad, als er noch in Basra tätig war, einen modernen "Swimmingpool" als Taufbasin akzeptiert hat."

<sup>7</sup> J. J. Buckley, "The Mandaean Ṭabahata Masiqta", in *Numen* XXVIII, 2 (1981), 138-163, 138.

<sup>8</sup> G. Widengren, "Heavenly Enthronement and Baptism. Studies in Mandaean Baptism", in *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, J. Neusner (ed.), (SHR XIV), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, 551-582.

<sup>9</sup> MD 265a.

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed treatment of the mythology concerning living water, cf. especially, K. Rudolph, *Die Mandäer. II. Der Kult*, (FRLANT N.F. 57), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961, 61-66.

<sup>11</sup> "Auf der Lichterde war das Leben,  
und vom Leben entstand das Wasser.  
Vom Leben entstand das Wasser,  
und vom Wasser entstand der Glanz.  
Vom Glanz entstand das Licht,  
und vom Licht entstanden die Uthras."

(In each case the translations from the German are by the author.)

<sup>12</sup> "Die große Frucht entstand,  
und in ihr entstand der Jordan.

Der große Jordan entstand,  
 es entstand das lebende Wasser.  
 Es entstand das glänzende, prangende Wasser,  
 und aus dem lebenden Wasser bin ich, das Leben, entstanden.”

<sup>13</sup> MD 265b.

<sup>14</sup> The black water is described as a kind of primeval chaos of boiling water (GR III 71, 17-18) which brings death to any who would step into it and scorches anyone who would see it (GR III 71, 19-20). On the other hand, this water is also creative material; cf. e.g. GR XII 277, 31-32; V 161, 32-34; CP 1.

<sup>15</sup> MD 247b. Note the association of water and life imagery in the titles of Mandā dHajjē: the fountainhead of life (niba d-hiia; ML 12,1; 64,3; (130,11); MD 296b) and the spring of life (mambuha d-hiia; ML 77,1; MD 245b).

<sup>16</sup> “Es soll hingehen, in das trübe Wasser fallen, und das Wasser werde schmackhaft, auf daß die Menschenkinder es trinken und dem großen Leben gleich werden.”

<sup>17</sup> A similar tradition about the creation of a jordan in the world by two ʿuthras is found in GR III 92, 12-15. K. Rudolph (*Theogonie, Kosmogonie und Anthropogonie in den mandäischen Schriften. Eine literarkritische und traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965, 206 n. 1) suggests the ʿuthras are Šilmai and Nidbai.

<sup>18</sup> “So ergoß sich das Wasser  
 und wurde die Verbindung dieser Welt hergestellt.”

Lidzbarski makes it clear that the connection is between the earthly world and the world of light by adding, after “hergestellt”, n. 5: “Mit der oberen Welt” (“With the world above”).

<sup>19</sup> Drower (MII, xxiv-xxv) reported that the Mandaeans assert the word has no reference to the river Jordan in Palestine and that they derive all earthly rivers from the prototype, the Light-Euphrates, a white, pure river rising in a mountain named Karimla; cf. e.g. DN, 52 (text), 78 [Tafel IV] (illustration). The more recent suggestion that the Mandaean tradition has its origin ultimately in Judaism (Rudolph, *Mandaeism*, 3-4; and esp. his *Die Mandäer. I. Prolegomena: Das Mandäerproblem*, (FRLANT N.F. 56), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) is supported to a degree by the legend, recorded in HG 7-10, that there was persecution of Mandaeans/Naṣōraeans in Jerusalem after which they moved into Iranian territory. With the settlement of the Mandaeans in the Tigris and Euphrates area, it is easy to understand how the concept of the Jordan is adapted to the local area and becomes the concept of the Light-Euphrates; cf. Rudolph, *Prolegomena*, 62-66; *Mandaeism*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> In my investigation of the maṣbūtā prayers, I have used Drower’s edition and English translation of the text. The reader should also consult the edition and German translation of M. Lidzbarski (cf. ML in the abbreviations). For studies on the origin of the ritual, cf. e.g. E. Segelberg, *Maṣbūtā. Studies in the Ritual of the Mandaean Baptism*, (AAWG.PH NF 17,1), Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1958, 155-184; Rudolph, *Kult*, “34. Taufe und Mahl”, 340-402.

Scholars in general attest the difficulty of studying the Mandaean liturgical texts in their present form given the degree of corruption over time; cf. e.g. E. Segelberg (“The *pihta* and *mambuha* Prayers. To the question of the liturgical development among the Mandaeans”, in *Gnosis. Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, B. Aland (ed.), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978, 464-472):

“...When studying the Mandaean liturgy one has to keep in mind that the present texts may have had a long history before reaching their present place and

shape. They may sometimes have got their present function rather accidentally. The earlier stages have no doubt been considerably shorter and the texts more to the point.” (472)

<sup>21</sup> Drower, *MII*, 1; cf. šba (II), *MD* 388b-389a. Cf. also the comment by Rudolph, (*Kult*, 94), concerning the Mandaean understanding of the soul:

“Die Seele ist im tiefsten Sinn Täufling und Teilhaber der Taufe bzw. des Jordans. In der Taufe geht es um die Seele”.

<sup>22</sup> Drower, *MII*, 102.

<sup>23</sup> Segelberg, (*Mašbūtā*, 48), notes the close relation of *CP* 12 and *CP* 18.

<sup>24</sup> Drower, *MII*, 100.

<sup>25</sup> In *CP* 45, it is life which frees souls from death, darkness and evil and shows souls the way of life (iuhra d-ḥiia; *MD* 343a) and guides their feet into ways of truth and faith; cf. also *CP* 24. In *GR* XII 271, 26ff, life is the way to the world of Light:

You are the way of the perfect,  
the path, which ascends to the place of light.

You are the life of eternity...

(“Du bist der Weg der Vollkommenen,  
der Pfad, der zum Lichtort emporsteigt.

Du bist das Leben von Ewigkeit...”).

<sup>26</sup> Rudolph, (*Kult*, 81 n. 8.), is unsure whether the one who speaks of being a guide is the priest or the jordan. Further to the concept of baptism as a way to the world of light, the heavenly baptisms of Hibil-Zīwā in *GR* V 163,28-164,5 might well be interpreted as both purification and re-entry rite into the heavenly region.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. e.g. the summary of scholarly opinion on the meaning of the baptismal ritual in Rudolph, *Kult*, 91-92; cf. also 97 n. 2. As regards the actualisation of the soul in the world of light by the ritual of baptism, it would seem that a more thorough study needs to be done on the concepts of setting up, raising up, making stand, that one finds in the ritual; cf. Segelberg, *Mašbūtā*, 152-154; Widengren, *Enthronement*, 561-568; Rudolph, *Kult*, 95-96. For a discussion of the jordan as a bridge to the world of light, cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Die Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe. Mit Beiträgen von L. Troje*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967, (reprint from Leipzig/Berlin, 1929), 13-14; and cf. also W. Bousset, *Die Himmelfahrt der Seele*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960, (reprint from *ARW* Bd. 4, Leipzig, 1901, ss. 136-169, 229-273), 39; and W. Brandt, *Das Schicksal der Seele nach dem Tode, nach mandäischen und parsischen Vorstellungen. Mit einem Nachwort zum Neudruck von Geo Widengren*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967, (reprint from *JPTH* 18, 1892, ss. 405-438, 575-603), 67-68.

<sup>28</sup> “Die Taufe ist Voraussetzung für den Aufstieg der Seele nach dem Tode: Mašbūtā und Masiqtā gehören zusammen”; Rudolph, *Kult*, 97.

<sup>29</sup> Segelberg, *Mašbūtā*, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Rudolph, *Kult*, 73; note, in *GR* V 191, 28, the command of Mandā dḤaijē to John the Baptist, “Let the Jordan flow free”, although here Mandā dḤaijē is not functioning as the priest. Cf. also Drower, *MII*, 122 n. 17—“Now this flowing free is necessary in the *mandī*-pool, and if the priest perceives that the water is getting sluggish, he orders a better clearing of the water channels, so that the water may be ‘living’, i.e. ‘flowing free’.” The flowing of the water is absolutely essential. Note that the polemic against Christian baptism in *GR* 57, 1ff is based on the fact that the Christians cut off the water for their baptismal rites into baptismal fonts which means that their baptismal water is no longer in connection with life.

<sup>31</sup> Drower, *MII*, 100-101.

<sup>32</sup> Drower, *MII*, 105.

<sup>33</sup> The verb used is *nha*; *MD* 290a-b.

<sup>34</sup> Note the similar reaction of the Jordan in *GR* V 192, 16-23 at the baptism of Mandā dHaijē by John the Baptist. Here, however, when John is unable to stand because of the swirling waters, Mandā dHaijē causes the waters to flow back and John to stand in the middle on dry ground.

<sup>35</sup> "Aldann festigte Mandā dHaijē die Taufe. Er stieg dann aus dem Jordan und schloß Kuštā mit den Großen."

<sup>36</sup> The two expressions of establishing baptism and establishing the jordan are not so unconnected as they may appear. Rudolph, (*Kult*, 73), gives the parallel *termini technici* for baptism as "to receive the jordan" ("den Jordan nehmen bzw. empfangen") and "to get into the jordan" ("in den Jordan steigen").

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the difficulties as attested by Segelberg, *Mašbūtā*, 69.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. e.g. Segelberg, *Mašbūtā*, 20; Rudolph, *Kult*, 219-222.

<sup>39</sup> "Reflektiert man auf den Unterschied zwischen 'Festigung' und 'Lösung', so kann man sagen, daß 'Festigung' dem 'Wirksammachen' entspricht, und 'Lösung' dem 'Wirkungslosmachen', also der Konsekration und Dekonsekration; doch ist in unseren jetzigen Quellen dieser Unterschied stark verwischt und nicht explicit ausgedrückt"; Rudolph, *Kult*, 222 n. 2.

<sup>40</sup> That there is danger in the water is clear from the prayers. *CP* 13 explains that the priest goes into the water before the souls to be baptised so as to be a protection against evil, and the heavenly guardians of the jordan are asked to secure, seal, and guard those going down into the water. That the jordan can be a dangerous element is attested elsewhere; in *HG* 8, 7-9, the Palestinian Jordan and its tributaries mount their banks and quench the light of the banners of the enemies who had destroyed the Naṣōraeans; *ATŠ* I, 34 refers to the evil power which takes over the jordan at the time of New Year when the guardian spirits of light are absent. One who dips his hand into the jordan at such a time "will become the portion of fire".

<sup>41</sup> This danger of transitional states is perhaps better known in the *masiqta* in which, for example, a mistake with the action of signing at various parts of the ritual may cause the soul to be destroyed; cf. e.g. *ARR* 49,4-50,24.

<sup>42</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, 96. Victor Turner (*The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-structure*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, 109) writes in support of Douglas' argument that these states (which he calls "liminal") are dangerous. For Turner's theory on the liminal phase in general, cf. esp., in the same volume, chapter 3: "Liminality and Communitas", 94-130; also *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1974, 13-17; *On the Edge of the Bush. Anthropology as Experience*, E. L. B. Turner (ed.), Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1985, 158-161, 294-296.

<sup>43</sup> Buckley, *Masiqta*, 139. Apart from the question of impersonation by the priests, there is of course in the mythology the mediating saviour figure, Hibil-Ziwā, son of Manā dHaijē, yet even he must undergo heavenly baptism before he can be restored to his proper place in the world of light after his journeying in the world of darkness (*GR* V 163,31-164,5; *DMasb* 31ff).

<sup>44</sup> Rudolph, *Kult*, 103-104.

<sup>45</sup> Rudolph, *Kult*, 103 n. 2.



## W. B. KRISTENSEN AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION

RICHARD J. PLANTINGA

### I. *Introduction*

Despite a major publication in English<sup>1</sup> and the fact that over half a century has passed since he retired after a thirty-six year tenure in the chair of history and phenomenology of religion at the University of Leiden, the expatriate Norwegian scholar W. B. Kristensen (1867-1953) remains largely unknown outside of The Netherlands and Scandinavia.<sup>2</sup> This is unfortunate, for not only was Kristensen a brilliant and pioneering practitioner of the study of religion in his own right, he also left an indelible impression on several members of the subsequent generation of *Religionswissenschaftler*—including his students Gerardus van der Leeuw, Hendrik Kraemer and C. J. Bleeker.<sup>3</sup> For more than one reason, then, Kristensen's approach to the study of religion merits inspection.<sup>4</sup> It is to this task that the present article is dedicated.

In the first part, Kristensen's three-fold conception of the study of religion is examined. In presenting his view of the history of religion, phenomenology of religion and philosophy of religion, it will become apparent that Kristensen was principally occupied in the first two of these provinces of the study of religion. Moreover, it will be shown that he viewed these as essentially descriptive undertakings (in reaction against evolutionary and apologetic approaches to the study of religion) in which the *Religionswissenschaftler* ought to come to the conclusion that the believer is always right.

In the second part of the article, Kristensen's position is critically discussed. In focussing on his conception of understanding, it is argued that his criticisms of evolutionary, apologetic and rationalistic approaches to the study of religion led him to an elevated evaluation of objectivity in such study. His critique of "subjectivism" in turn seemed to make him partially blind to the roles that pre-judgments and historicity play in human under-

standing. Ultimately, it is argued that Kristensen's position is hermeneutically unsatisfactory and that his insistence on the correctness of the believer's position leads to potentially relativistic conclusions. Despite these shortcomings, however, the article concludes that Kristensen's demand that the student of religion be a serious and sympathetic listener represents the chief positive and ever-relevant element in his *religionswissenschaftliche* method.

How then did W. B. Kristensen, a "scholar of rare qualities,"<sup>5</sup> as C. J. Bleeker once described him, conceive of the study of religion?

## II. *History, Phenomenology and Philosophy of Religion*

Before undertaking an examination of Kristensen's conception of the study of religion, a few words about his view of religion (*gods-dienst*)<sup>6</sup> are in order. Kristensen did not actually formulate his own definition of religion but rather adopted Schleiermacher's dictum in the *Reden* that religion is an *Anschauung des Universums*. In other words, religion is the human capacity for creatively and intuitively conceiving an infinite spiritual reality (the universe or God) in a personal way. Alternately expressed—and in Schleiermacher's later formulation in *Der christliche Glaube*—religion is *das schlechthinnige Abhängigkeitsgefühl*.<sup>7</sup> A religious person is thus one who is moved in the process of becoming conscious of the actuality of the universe or God; and a religion is a religion only insofar as an *Anschauung des Universums* is central to it.<sup>8</sup>

According to Kristensen, with this conception Schleiermacher also laid the foundation for the study of the history of religion—the first part in Kristensen's three-fold conception of the study of religion and his own true love.<sup>9</sup> That is, different peoples in different times and places inevitably produce different *Anschauungen des Universums*; it is for this reason that there are many religions. But no one person can study all of these religions and therefore one must make choices. Of the many religions that exist and have existed, Kristensen limited himself to the study of the ancient Western religions of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Persia and Babylonia—in part because he could master their languages and sources, which he held to be a requirement of the highest priority in the study of religion.<sup>10</sup>

In discussing the task of the history of religion, Kristensen took great pains to criticize what he took to be an incorrect approach to historical data: the approach of "evaluative comparison," which found expression both in the evolutionary approach of his teacher and predecessor at Leiden C.P. Tiele, and in the Christian theological approach of his student and hand-picked successor at Leiden Hendrik Kraemer.<sup>11</sup> The approach of evaluative comparison presupposes an *a priori* ideal or standard by which it measures, compares and evaluates the data it studies. In such study, according to Kristensen, one does not listen to what the data say. Rather, one tells the data what one wants to hear and in this way arrives at pre-determined results. Instead of judging by what the believers of the religion in question took to be the interpretive key to their religious expressions, the historian who engages in evaluative comparison uses an alien interpretive key or pre-judgment imposed from without. Such scholarship is subjective and egocentric: "We do not learn to know and understand the other (although that indeed should be the task of historical research!); we see only its relation to us. We look for and find and understand ourselves in the events of history."<sup>12</sup> Thus, in evaluative-comparative historical study, it is an illusion to think we are dealing with anyone but ourselves.<sup>13</sup>

Over against such evaluative comparison, Kristensen advocated the practice of "informative comparison" in historical study.<sup>14</sup> In order to understand a given phenomenon, one can and sometimes must compare similar phenomena in different religious traditions, even if they are apparently historically unrelated.<sup>15</sup> This "method"—although Kristensen was hesitant to designate it as such—is not evaluative but descriptive as regards the comparison of historical data and anticipates the characteristic type of comparative investigation undertaken in phenomenology of religion. In thus going about historical investigation, the historian does not take history captive but is rather taken captive by history.<sup>16</sup>

This last statement comes close to the heart of Kristensen's approach to the study of the history of religion. In order to understand the believers of a given religious tradition, which for Kristensen meant to understand them as they understood themselves, the historian needs to selflessly and sympathetically adopt

their point of view and so let them speak for themselves without interruption. Kristensen writes:

As long as he [the historian] cannot enter *into* the subject and make the point of view of the people he is studying his own, his description will not succeed. He must be able to give himself to the other and to unselfishly forget himself; only then is there hope that history will open itself to him and that he will conceive the data in their proper significance.<sup>17</sup>

In thus becoming “Persians in order to understand Persian religion... [and] Babylonians to understand Babylonian religion, and so forth,”<sup>18</sup> a new type of evaluation results: During the work of investigation, the historian comes to see the inner and independent worth of the other—without reference to a preconceived ideal. Such evaluation thus makes *itself* known as it grips the historian and calls forth sympathy. In the process of historical study, then, the very norm by which the investigator proceeds is modified; the data defines the historian as much as the historian defines the data.<sup>19</sup> Hence, Kristensen says, the study of the history of religion does not leave the investigator unchanged; in studying religion, one grows religiously. As such, historical investigation is a risky venture: in giving up one’s own centrality and in recognizing religious ideals of independent value, one can feel as though one has lost one’s compass. Our newly-acquired “unlimited sympathy *paralyses our capacity to act*”; knowing other religious values “*paralyses our religious judgment*.”<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, this recognition of the other does not lead to a bottomless skepticism: the background of every religious formulation is infinite, divine reality. Hence, in coming to know different attempts to express the inexpressible, the historian is led not to skepticism but toward the mystery that is the goal of all religions.<sup>21</sup>

What role, then, do pre-judgments play in historical investigation?<sup>22</sup> Kristensen did not deny that one brings experience, intuition, personality, and sympathy to one’s work. Nor did he deny that the individual’s particular disposition is a very important factor in the investigation undertaken. What he did deny is the validity of unbridled subjectivism, of *a priori* and often unenunciated presuppositions playing a dominant and determinative role in historical study.<sup>23</sup> Once again, Kristensen stressed that the historian needs to give up such presuppositions in an act of self-

surrender in preparation for being told something by the data and that the historian is *changed* during the process of investigation. This fact of being defined by the data—even as the historian defines the data—constitutes objectivity in the science of history. In other words, over against subjectivistic skepticism which denies the possibility of understanding *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* and which states that all historical understanding is but a reflection of the historian's preconceptions, Kristensen maintained the possibility of approximate objectivity: while perfect objectivity is a goal striven for and never entirely reached, the science of history need not be enslaved by presuppositions in the way apologetics is. Because historians who properly go about their work are not knowers but investigators—seekers after knowledge—they have no *a priori* truths to defend. Thus, the end goal of their inquiry is open; in other words they are free—free to be moulded by the data under investigation (proper objectivity). Naturally, this freedom is limited: the individual's particular disposition also plays a role (proper subjectivity).

In historical study, then, the investigator should inquire only into what the believers of a given religion themselves expressed; it is their sole right to testify about their religion and the historian has no right to doubt their testimony. Their conceptions and judgments are the only reality that exist for the historian; one must learn to see with their eyes in order to understand them as they understood themselves. In so adopting their judgments—in accordance with Kristensen's policy of self-surrender—the historian comes to see that the believers are always right, that their religion has independent validity (as one attempt to express the inexpressible) and that their religion makes an absolute and incomparable claim. Kristensen was unrelenting in his emphasis on this matter. To cite but one of many passages where he clearly articulates these convictions:

If we want to learn to know them [historical religions] as the believers themselves conceived and judged them, we must first attempt to understand their own evaluation of their own religion. ... Let us not forget that there exists no other religious reality than the faith [*geloof*<sup>24</sup>] of the believers. If we want to learn to know genuine religion, we are exclusively assigned to the expressions of the believers. What we think from our standpoint about the essence or value of other religions bears witness to our own faith, to our own concep-

tion of religious belief, but if our opinion about another religion deviates from the opinion and the evaluation of the believer himself, then we are no longer dealing with their religion ... [but] we are exclusively concerned with ourselves.<sup>25</sup>

In the attempt to understand as the believers understood, the historian comes to recognize that this is a goal which can never be fully reached, although it must always be striven for. Especially with regard to ancient religions, the investigator recognizes the great difference between their conceptions and his own. Their experience cannot be completely relived; a modern cannot see with ancient eyes; one cannot understand perfectly (i.e., like the believer) but only approximately by using empathy and imagination.<sup>26</sup> This recognition makes symbolic interpretation necessary for the investigator. Even though the concept of symbol was unknown to the ancients, the historian needs to make use of this heuristic device in order to understand. In other words, we can only construe their reality symbolically; what they knew directly and perfectly, we can only know indirectly and approximately.<sup>27</sup> Kristensen writes:

We understand that symbolic explanation is only a means to approximately understand ancient religions. It does not supply us with an entrance into the goal of the ancients. For religion is belief in divine reality, not in the symbols of that reality. But we will never penetrate that most holy matter of ancient religions. We remain strangers in the forecourt of the temple.<sup>28</sup>

Turning now from Kristensen's conception of the history of religion to a consideration of his view of the phenomenology of religion, the first thing to be noted is the close relationship that exists between these two branches of the science of religion. According to Kristensen, history and phenomenology of religion assume and mutually anticipate one another. Hence, it is not surprising that many of the themes that Kristensen discusses in his treatment of the task of the history of religion are also emphasized in his comments on the nature of the phenomenology of religion. In fact, he defines phenomenology of religion as the "systematic, that is to say, comparative, history of religion."<sup>29</sup> While history of religion, which concentrates on the particular, must on occasion compare historical data (see the above discussion of "informative comparison"), this is not its characteristic task; the work of systematic and typological comparison properly belongs to the phenom-

ology of religion, which, of course, avails itself of the results achieved by the history of religion.<sup>30</sup>

As the systematic description of the history of religion, then, phenomenology of religion takes historical data out of their historical contexts and studies them in groups.<sup>31</sup> In order to understand not only, say, Egyptian or Babylonian sacrifice, but sacrifice in general, phenomenology of religion makes use of typology and draws ideal lines of connection. In so doing, the phenomenologist needs to use intuition (*Anschauung*) in order to anticipate which data are essential and which are not.<sup>32</sup> In thus comparing a group of religious data and in order to illustrate humanity's religious disposition, the phenomenologist asks: What religious thought, idea or need underlies this group of phenomena? What religious value did these phenomena have for the believers themselves? Taking the viewpoint of the believer as its starting-point, phenomenology of religion "tries to gain an over-all view of the ideas and motives which are of decisive importance in all of History of Religion."<sup>33</sup> As in the history of religion, this task involves abandoning our preconceptions; only in surrendering ourselves to others will they surrender to us. If we speak, they will remain silent and thus we will not understand them—which is the goal of phenomenological inquiry. In other words, phenomenological investigation, like historical study, is only capable of approximate understanding.

Although phenomenology of religion tries to understand the overall ideas and motives operative in the history of religion, it does not and cannot articulate the essence of religion.<sup>34</sup> This formulation is the chief task of the third branch of the science of religion, namely, the philosophy of religion.<sup>35</sup> In executing this task, the philosophy of religion needs to pay attention to historical data as well as to experience: it is not possible to describe the essence of religion, Kristensen argued, without knowing from experience what religion is. The philosophy of religion thus makes use of the results of the history and phenomenology of religion; and the history and phenomenology of religion anticipate the philosophy of religion as well as utilize its formulation of the essence of religion—particularly with regard to the intuitive task of deciding which phenomena are *essential* and which are not.

In a statement that sums up the interdependence and non-linear unity of the three branches of the science of religion, Kristensen writes:

Thus we see that anticipated concepts and principles are used in all the provinces of the general science of religion: history, typology [phenomenology] and philosophy. We are continually anticipating the results of later research. That typifies the character of the "authority" of each of the three subdivisions of the science of religion. None of the three is independent; the value and the accuracy of the results of one of them depend on the value and accuracy of the results of the other two. The place which the research of Phenomenology occupies between history and philosophy makes it extraordinarily interesting and important. The particular and the universal interpenetrate again and again; Phenomenology is at once systematic History of Religion and applied Philosophy of Religion.<sup>36</sup>

With this statement, the presentation of Kristensen's three-fold conception of the study of religion is complete. The discussion now turns to a critical assessment of his position.

### III. *On Understanding: Is the Believer Always Right?*

Although one may wonder about the missing elements in Kristensen's three-fold conception of the science of religion (his critique of psychological approaches seems to rule out psychology of religion; his lack of attention paid to social issues leaves sociology of religion without a home; his distrust of ethnography and his stress on the study of written sources in their original languages closes the door to anthropology of religion; and his critique of evaluative comparison does not allow for anything resembling theology of religion), the present critique will focus on Kristensen's conception of "understanding" in the history and phenomenology of religion—the two areas in which he primarily worked.<sup>37</sup> In thus reconsidering his approach to the study of the history and phenomenology of religion, it will implicitly be asked whether or not there are points at which his presentation might be strengthened. Thus, this critique intends to be constructive.<sup>38</sup>

The central issues in Kristensen's conception of understanding and in his approach to the study of the history and phenomenology of religion are the role played by pre-judgments and the status of objectivity.<sup>39</sup> Late in the twentieth century, it is not difficult to appreciate Kristensen's reaction to and critique of evolutionary



approaches to the study of religion. Many practitioners of the study of religion would also applaud his stand with regard to the placelessness of apologetics within the science of religion. Furthermore, most scholars involved in the study of religion would have little problem in appreciating his reaction to and criticisms of rationalism as an obstacle to the understanding of religion. In other words, Kristensen was correctly critical of subjectivism, of pre-judgments which play a determinative and distortive role and thus hinder understanding. However, this need not lead to the conclusion drawn principally by the Enlightenment,<sup>40</sup> namely, that pre-judgments *as such* hinder understanding and that objectivity is paradigmatic. It is possible to argue persuasively—as Hans-Georg Gadamer has done—that pre-judgments (*Vorurteile*) are in fact necessary in order for understanding to occur.<sup>41</sup> More specifically, by asking the proper questions—a task which looks easier than it in fact is—one needs to distinguish illegitimate *Vorurteile* (which hinder understanding) from legitimate *Vorurteile* (which foster understanding). The latter can be regarded positively as decisions made in advance (*Vorentscheidungen*) and not just as negative, false, unfounded judgments. Such a positive evaluation of *Vorurteile* can be observed in instances of submission to authority: in rationally and freely recognizing the superiority of the other's insight in some matter, one is implanted with *Vorurteile* which one then comes to legitimate (or repudiate).

Now Kristensen, it seems, *implicitly* recognized all of this: he saw the necessity of (religious) experience, intuition, personality, sympathy—in short, the indispensability of the individual disposition of the investigator—in understanding. Yet, he also denied that presuppositions should play a role in understanding; one need only recall his remarks about self-forgetfulness. Again, Kristensen recognized the hermeneutical circle, the fact that understanding is led by the anticipation of completeness (*Vorgriff der Vollkommenheit*), the necessity of pre-understanding and expectations of sense and meaning (*Sinnerwartungen*): he stressed the necessity of anticipation and intuition, he recognized that understanding can only be approximate and he recognized that a dialectical relationship exists between the investigator and the data. Yet, he held objectivity up as the goal toward which historians and phenomenologists ought to

aspire. One can only wonder—along with Wilfred Cantwell Smith—if objectivity *might* be proper for the study of *objects* but certainly not for the understanding of the *faith of believers*, which was Kristensen's self-declared intent and goal.<sup>42</sup> Again, Kristensen recognized the difference between the horizon of the past or text and the horizon of the present or interpreter. He was prepared to let the text tell or ask him something. Yet, he seemed unwilling to ask questions of the text or to tell it something (and this, of course, is the very place where *Vorurteile* come into play). He was, in other words, not willing to converse or dialogue with the text in an attempt to understand it; he wished to engage in monologue, *to forget himself and his own historicity*. Thus, Kristensen's reader cannot help but ask: Despite some unresolved conflicts and as attractive as this *may* sound prescriptively, is this approach to the study of religion possible hermeneutically? The answer, it seems, is "no." And if the answer is "no," it does not seem expedient to discuss the question of the desirability of such an approach.

If it is thus not possible to understand believers as they understood themselves, one can also question what it might mean that the believer is always right. If this means that the believer's participatory self-understanding somehow exceeds the understanding of the non-participatory interpreter or that the investigator is heavily dependent on the believer for data or information, there is not much to argue about. However, if this dictum means that the believer cannot be questioned (!) or is above reproach, there is a great deal about which to argue. What happens when the people studied by the historian or phenomenologist of religion engage in human sacrifice? What happens when the investigator learns that the subjects under investigation are dishonest or unscrupulous? Is the believer always right? Does not the requirement of self-forgetfulness really mean that the investigator must abandon even moral and judicial claims (to say nothing of personal religious beliefs)? And does not this—at least potentially—lead to the blurring of truth questions and thus to a sinister form of relativism and self-compromise?<sup>43</sup>

Relatedly, one might also question the predominantly descriptive character of Kristensen's approach to the history and phenomenology of religion. In other words, having described this or that in

a given religious tradition, what do I as an investigator make of it? How do I judge or evaluate it? Or, as Gadamer might ask, are not understanding, interpretation and application one in the hermeneutical *Vorgang*?<sup>44</sup> Mere description does not, then, seem to satisfy hermeneutical demands or the inevitable questions raised by the *human* interpreter.

In sum, while a complete adoption of Kristensen's approach to the study of religion would not be advisable—or, for that matter, possible—present-day practitioners of the science of religion may justly desire to emulate the positive elements in his *religionswissenschaftliche* method. Foremost among these would be Kristensen's insistence on giving the adherents of any given religious tradition a fair hearing, on sympathetically and imaginatively trying to get inside their universe. Naturally, this requires the leaving behind of negative *Vorurteile*, which hinder understanding. Alternately expressed—and in an epithet that one imagines Kristensen himself might have employed—perhaps the science of religion ought to be regarded as the art of listening.

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<sup>1</sup> Kristensen's major publication in English is *The Meaning of Religion: Lectures in the Phenomenology of Religion*, trans. John B. Carman, Intro. by Hendrik Kraemer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960). All English translations from Kristensen's Dutch sources in this article are my own.

<sup>2</sup> On Kristensen generally (including some reference to the fact that he was never well-known in the broader scholarly world), see: Douglas Allen, *Structure and Creativity in Religion: Hermeneutics in Mircea Eliade's Phenomenology and New Directions*, Religion and Reason, 14 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), pp. 64-6; C. J. Bleeker, "In Memoriam Professor Dr. W. Brede Kristensen," *Numen* I (1954), 235-6; A. de Buck, "Herdenking W. B. Kristensen," *Jaarboek der Koninklijk*

*Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, 1953-54, 295-305; J. B. Carman, "Kristensen, W. Brede," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, Vol. 8 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 382-3; Carl F. Hallencreutz, *Kraemer Towards Tambaram: A Study in Hendrik Kraemer's Missionary Approach*, *Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia*, VII (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1966), pp. 113-8; Hendrik Kraemer, "Introduction," in Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. xi-xxv; Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1975), pp. 227-9; Jacques Waardenburg, *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion: Aims, Methods and Theories of Research*, Vol. I, Religion and Reason, 3 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1973), pp. 55-6, 390; Jacques Waardenburg, "Religion Between Reality and Idea: A Century of Phenomenology of Religion in the Netherlands," *Numen* XIX (1972), 145-61. For bibliographical information on Kristensen, see Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 497-500, and Jacques Waardenburg, *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion: Aims, Methods and Theories of Research*, Vol. II, Religion and Reason, 4 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1974), pp. 137-9.

<sup>3</sup> See the following testimonies to Kristensen's greatness and influence: M. A. Beek, "Le Professeur W. B. Kristensen et l'Ancien Testament," *Liber Amicorum: Studies in Honour of Professor Dr. C. J. Bleeker*, Studies in the History of Religions (Supplements to *Numen*), XVII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 14; Bleeker, "In Memoriam," 235-6; C. J. Bleeker, "The Religion of Ancient Egypt," *Historia Religionum: Handbook for the History of Religions*, eds. C. J. Bleeker and Geo Widengren, Vol. I: Religions of the Past (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 113; Kees Bolle, "Myths and Other Religious Texts," *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Vol. I, ed. Frank Whaling, Religion and Reason, 27 (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1983), pp. 322-3; de Buck, "Herdenking," 295-305; Carman, "Kristensen," p. 382; Kraemer, "Introduction," pp. xi-xvii, xxv; Hendrik Kraemer, *De wortelen van het syncretisme* (The Hague: Boekencentrum N.V., 1937), pp. 26-7; Gerardus van der Leeuw, "Confession scientifique," *Numen* I (1954), 9; Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Godsvoorstellingen in de Oud-Aegyptische Pyramidetexten* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1916), p. vii; Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Plaats en taak van de godsdienstgeschiedenis in de theologische wetenschap* (Groningen: J. B. Wolters U.M., 1918), p. 24; Jacques Waardenburg, *Reflections on the Study of Religion: Including an Essay on the Work of Gerardus van der Leeuw*, Religion and Reason, 15 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), pp. 188-9, 244; Waardenburg, "Religion Between," 201.

<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy and somewhat surprising that relatively little has been published on Kristensen, who is by no means an unimportant figure in the history of the study of religion.

<sup>5</sup> Bleeker, "In Memoriam," 235.

<sup>6</sup> Although Dutch has two more or less synonymous terms for the English "religion"—*religie* and *godsdienst*—Kristensen, like many Dutch scholars, preferred the term *godsdienst*. *Godsdienst* means something like "service and worship of God" and "manner and system of worshiping God" (see the *van Dale Nieuw Handwoordenboek der Nederlandse Taal*, 7th ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), p. 271). The use of this term, which is somewhat more personal than *religie*, has a certain affinity with Wilfred Cantwell Smith's personalism and criticisms of the reified term "religion." It is also interesting to note that although they studied very different believers living in very different eras, Kristensen's insistence on focussing on the faith of the believer is remarkably similar to Smith's approach to the study of the "faith of other men" (although there are also substantial differences between the two approaches). See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Publishing Co., 1963).

<sup>7</sup> For Schleiermacher's conception of religion, see the second of the *Reden* ("Ueber das Wesen der Religion") in *Ueber die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 6th ed., ed. Rudolf Otto (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967) and paragraphs 3 and 4 of *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der Evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*, 7th ed., ed. Martin Redeker, Vol. I (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1960). On Kristensen's adaptation of Schleiermacher's view, see: W. B. Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting van de godsdienstgeschiedenis," *Symbool en werkelijkheid: Godsdiensthistorische Studiën* (1954; rpt. Zeist: Uitgeversmaatschappij W. DeHaan N.V., 1962), pp. 24-30 and especially pp. 25-7; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 28, 30, 33-4, 254-5, 272, 286, 337; Kraemer, "Introduction," p. xix; Waardenburg, "Religion Between," 146-7.

On Kristensen's general positive appraisal of Schleiermacher, see: Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," pp. 24-30; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 28, 30, 33-4, 41, 48, 212, 251, 254-5, 262, 272, 276, 279, 286, 423; Beek, "Le Professeur," pp. 14-5.

<sup>8</sup> See Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," pp. 25-9.

<sup>9</sup> This is evidenced in part by the fact that most of Kristensen's writings are about history of religion (*godsdienstgeschiedenis*). Although history of religion and phenomenology of religion are closely connected in Kristensen's thought—as this article will demonstrate later on—Kristensen was first and foremost a historian of religion. See W. B. Kristensen, "Over waardering van historische gegevens," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, pp. 66-84 and especially p. 66. On Kristensen's judgment that Schleiermacher laid the foundation for the study of the history of religion, see Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," pp. 27-9.

<sup>10</sup> See: W. B. Kristensen, "Geschiedenis der godsdiensten," *Vox Theologica* 10/3 (December 1938), 80-1; W. B. Kristensen, *Inleiding tot de godsdienstgeschiedenis*, 3rd ed. [trans. J. Kristensen-Heldring] (1955; rpt. Haarlem: DeHaan, 1980), pp. 8-15; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 40-1, 203. Kristensen's own true *forte* was Egyptian religion.

<sup>11</sup> Kristensen was particularly critical of evolutionary approaches to the study of the history of religion—although he thought them to have a certain validity in philosophy of religion. See: W. B. Kristensen, "De absoluutheid van het Christendom," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, pp. 83-4; Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 75-9; Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," p. 24; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 83; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 18-22; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 1-2, 10-7, 152-3. He was not as critical of Christian theological approaches, which he believed to have validity for Christian theologians and apologists but not for historians. See: Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 69-71, 84; W. B. Kristensen, "De inaugurele rede van Professor van der Leeuw," *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 53 (1919), 260-1; W. B. Kristensen, "Geloof of bijgeloof?," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, pp. 15-6.

<sup>12</sup> Kristensen, "Over waardering," p. 79.

<sup>13</sup> See: Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 66-84, *passim*; Kristensen, "De absoluutheid," pp. 83-4; Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," p. 24; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 9-10, 18-22; Kristensen, *Meaning*, 1-2, 10-7, 152-3; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 83.

<sup>14</sup> For what follows on "informative comparison," see: Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 67-82, *inter alia*; Kristensen, "De absoluutheid," p. 89; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 18-21.

<sup>15</sup> Kristensen writes: "The unity of the human spirit appears so often in religious phenomena; we must continue to reckon with that—we must compare and draw ideal lines of connection." "Over waardering," p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> With respect to the methodological status of this approach, Kristensen argued that "this informative comparison is not a method that one can apply mechanically in order to achieve good results." *Inleiding*, p. 20. Furthermore: "Every investigator must go his own way and so use his own method," which presupposes a creative and intuitive capacity for deciding which data are essential and which are not. *Inleiding*, p. 21. See also: Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 20-2, 39, 113; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 80-1; Kristensen, "De inaugureele," 263-4. The test of the method is the results it produces. On the descriptive task of informative comparison and its inability to be used in conjunction with evaluative comparison, see Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 78, 80-2.

<sup>17</sup> Kristensen, "Over waardering," p. 73. See also: Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 74, 80; W. B. Kristensen, "Primitieve wijsheid," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, pp. 340, 346; W. B. Kristensen, "Rede gehouden bij de aanvang der theologische colleges," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, pp. 354-5; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 82-5; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 24-37; Kristensen, *Meaning*, p. 13. Kristensen did not take this to be an easy task; he recognized linguistic and other obstacles to understanding—such as the modern West's rationalistic attitude inherited from the ancient Greeks and Romans, which makes it difficult to properly and sympathetically understand religion. See: Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 24-37; W. B. Kristensen, "Symbool en werkelijkheid," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, p. 11; Kristensen, "Geloof," pp. 22-3.

<sup>18</sup> Kristensen, "Over waardering," p. 77.

<sup>19</sup> "We could indeed call this the evaluation of sympathy or love." Kristensen, "Over waardering," p. 75. See also Kristensen, "De inaugureele," 263-4.

<sup>20</sup> Kristensen, "Over waardering," p. 81. See also pp. 80-2, and Kristensen, *Meaning*, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> See Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 83-4.

<sup>22</sup> For what follows on the role of presuppositions and on objectivity, see: Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 66, 72, 74; Kristensen, "De inaugureele," 260-5; Kristensen, "Rede gehouden," pp. 348-55; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 82; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 22-4; Kristensen, *Meaning*, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Kristensen was critical of his student Gerardus van der Leeuw for his allegedly subjectivistic, psychological approach to the study of religion. See Kristensen, "De inaugureele," 260-5. Further on the Kristensen-van der Leeuw disagreement, see Waardenburg, *Reflections*, p. 244.

<sup>24</sup> The Dutch *geloof*, like the German *Glaube*, can be rendered by faith or belief.

<sup>25</sup> Kristensen, *Inleiding*, p. 22. See also: Kristensen, "Over waardering," pp. 77-9, 82-4; Kristensen, "De absoluutheid," pp. 87, 90-5; Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," pp. 25, 28-9; Kristensen, "Primitieve," pp. 334-45; W. B. Kristensen, "Het boven-ethische in de godsdienst," *Symbool en werkelijkheid*, p. 36; Kristensen, "Geloof," pp. 15-20; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 81-5; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 8, 18, 22-3, 52, 113-6; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 2, 6-7, 13-4, 17-8, 22-3, 80-1, 180, 203, 250, 363, 371, 390-1, 400, 418, 423, 459-60.

<sup>26</sup> In his attempt to understand ancient religions, Kristensen stressed the otherness of the ancients' conception of nature: their religious sense of nature is unknown to us. See Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 21, 42, 83, 88f, 104, 113, 120, 124, 134, 144, 148, 155, 192, 195, 204, 207f, 213, 270, 276, 280, 359f, 379, 450, 465. Also, one of the difficulties that moderns have in understanding the religion of others (including the ancients) is a certain inherited rationalism. See note 17 above.

<sup>27</sup> See: Kristensen, "Schleiermacher's opvatting," p. 29; Kristensen, "Symbol," pp. 7-14; Kristensen, "Geloof," pp. 22-3; Kristensen, "Geschiedenis," 82-3; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 16-8, 23-37, 74, 94; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 6-7, 17, 22, 37-9, 400-9.

<sup>28</sup> Kristensen, "Symbol," p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Kristensen, *Inleiding*, p. 19. For similar definitions, see: Kristensen, *Inleiding*, p. 113; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 1, 418. These are, of course, formal definitions. Materially, Kristensen divided phenomenology of religion into three areas: religious ideas concerning the world (cosmology), religious ideas about humanity (anthropology), and the practice of worship (cultus). See Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 23, 27-496.

<sup>30</sup> See Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>31</sup> For what follows on phenomenology of religion, see: Kristensen, "Over waardering," p. 67; Kristensen, *Inleiding*, pp. 18-21, 113; Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 1-15, 18, 23, 268, 275, 355-6, 417-8, 423. See also: Kraemer, "Introduction," pp. xx-xxii; Waardenburg, "Religion Between," 153ff. See also note 15 above.

<sup>32</sup> Kristensen points out that the phenomenologist must also draw on his sympathy and experience in executing this task. See *Meaning*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> Kristensen, *Meaning*, p. 2. Kristensen's insistence on beginning with the viewpoint of the believer led him to a rejection of Rudolf Otto's starting-point in the study of religion: "the holy" or "holiness." While Kristensen believed "holiness" to be central to religion, he felt that this kind of a *priori* view of the essence of religion produced distortive results in historical and phenomenological study. See Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 15-8, 355-6.

<sup>34</sup> See Kristensen, "De inaugureele," 262-3. See also note 23 above.

<sup>35</sup> For what follows on the philosophy of religion, see Kristensen, *Meaning*, pp. 8-18, 271, 275.

<sup>36</sup> Kristensen, *Meaning*, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Kristensen was not a philosopher—or a philosopher of religion—by orientation or practice (see note 9 above). However, and to further illustrate the point that Kristensen was not well-known outside of The Netherlands and Scandinavia, he was designated as an "evg. Religionsphilosoph" in the short paragraph devoted to him in the second edition of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. See Oskar Rühle, "Kristensen, William Brede," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., eds. Hermann Gunkel and Leopold Zscharnack, Vol. 3 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1929), p. 1321. In the third edition of the same work, Kristensen was not even given an entry(!). See Kurt Galling, ed., *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., Vol. 4 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1960).

<sup>38</sup> For what follows, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I. Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Gesammelte Werke, Vol. I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986), pp. 270-384.

<sup>39</sup> Sharpe also makes this point. See Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, pp. 228-9.

<sup>40</sup> Although explicitly critical of the rationalism of the ancients, Kristensen was not explicitly critical of the Enlightenment. One might say, though, that his Romantic tendencies and appreciation of Schleiermacher amount to an implicit critique of the Enlightenment.

<sup>41</sup> The translation of Gadamer's term "*Vorurteile*" as "pre-judgments" (which I take to be more less synonymous with "pre-understanding" or "*Vorverständnis*") instead of "prejudices" avoids unfortunate associations with the latter term, which has fallen into disrepute in the English-speaking world.

<sup>42</sup> See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Towards a World Theology: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1981), chapter 4. It is interesting to note that several standard scholarly reference works do *not* devote an article to "objectivity." See: Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 5 (New York: The Macmillan Co. & The Free Press, 1967); Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, eds., *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, rev. ed., Vol. 6 (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co AG, 1984); D. L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 11 (New York: The Macmillan Co. & The Free Press, 1968); Philip P. Wiener, ed., *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, Vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973). This lends credence to the thesis that "objectivity" is so much a part of the scholarly and methodological air breathed in the academy, that few people think to question and critically discuss it—resulting, to be sure, in more than a little "dogmatic slumber." For an indication that recent scholarship is awakening from such slumber, see Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

<sup>43</sup> See: Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, p. 229; G. B. Madison, *Understanding: A Phenomenological-Pragmatic Analysis*, Contributions in Philosophy, 19 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), chapter 2 (and especially pp. 45-51); Kraemer, "Introduction," p. xxiv. One might speculate that Kristensen's decision to focus on the distant religions of antiquity allowed him to ignore questions of a more "existential" nature.

<sup>44</sup> See Gadamer, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 312-6, 333-8.



SACRIFICE AND SUBSTITUTION:  
RITUAL MYSTIFICATION AND MYTHICAL  
DEMYSTIFICATION

BRIAN K. SMITH AND WENDY DONIGER

*1. Introduction*

Sacrifice, which might be minimally defined as the act of giving up something in order to receive something of greater worth, has been and remains a fundamental category in the study of religion. As such, sacrifice has sometimes functioned as a kind of paradigmatic or metonymical placeholder for all religious ritual, or as the foundation of all morality and ethics. Sacrifice has even been identified as the origin of civilization itself in the classical works of modern sociology and psychology by Émile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud, and there is a certain sense in which all life—human and nonhuman, cultural and natural—might be regarded as a series of deaths and rebirths, that is, as a continuous process of sacrifice.

But the operation of the ritual of sacrifice, it seems, depends on a kind of sleight of hand or self-deception, a shell game of displacement and replacement. Sacrifice is defined in relation to three crimes from which it is otherwise indistinguishable—suicide, murder, and deicide—and it becomes distinguishable from them only by a confusion of roles and a set of characteristic acts of substitution.

This apparently sacrilegious conclusion has been reached not only by the major modern theorists of the sacrificial ritual; it was also reached long ago in ancient India by the philosophers and mythologists of the sacrifice or *yajña*.

*2. Sacrifice and Substitution among the Theorists*

Substitution, the use of a “stand-in” in place of an original which then “represents” it, is at the very heart of sacrifice. Such,

in any case, is the opinion of many scholars who have approached the subject from a wide variety of methodological angles.

Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, in their *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, contended that “the very nature of sacrifice” is “dependent, in fact, on the presence of an intermediary, and we know that with no intermediary there is no sacrifice.”<sup>1</sup> Among other intermediaries so crucial to, even definitive of, the sacrificial ritual (including the priest who acts as a buffer and guide between the sacred and profane realms) is the ritual victim. The victim represents or “becomes” (and thus substitutes for) both the invisible divine recipient of the offering and the human being who makes the offering. “Through this proximity the victim, who already represents the gods, comes to represent the sacrificer [= sacrificer] also. Indeed, it is not enough to say that it represents him: it is merged in him. The two personalities are fused together.”<sup>2</sup> Every sacrificial victim, then, symbolizes both the god and the worshipper; every sacrifice is both an ersatz self-sacrifice and a dramatization of a deicide.

It is, according to these authors, through the victim (who is the full representative of and substitute for both the giver and the recipient of the sacrifice) that the “communication” between the sacred and profane realms is effected (and this is the “nature and function” of sacrifice according to Hubert and Mauss). This entails a kind of double substitution: the victim stands in for both the sacrificer and the deity and thereby draws them together.

Other scholars have also noted that sacrifice seems to be a kind of symbolic self-sacrifice; as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy puts it, “To sacrifice and to be sacrificed are essentially the same.”<sup>3</sup> “The only authentic sacrifice,” Sylvain Lévi has similarly, if more caustically, observed, “would be suicide.”<sup>4</sup> Literal self-sacrifice, as we shall see, does indeed appear in Indian ritual and mythological texts as the defining instance of the ideal—and therefore rarely realized—sacrifice. Or, second best, we read of a *sarvamedha*, the “sacrifice of everything,” in which the sacrificer gives away all and then, “dead to the world,” retires to a renouncer’s life in the wilderness.<sup>5</sup>

In a very basic sense, then, anything that one sacrifices is a surrogate for the ultimate paradigm underlying all sacrifices, the

sacrifice of oneself. The least symbolic of all sacrifices is the suicidal human sacrifice, in which the symbol stands for itself. It was this that led Joseph de Maistre to argue that the theory of sacrificial substitution could not apply to human sacrifice, since "One cannot kill a man to save a man." Yet, as René Girard points out in mocking de Maistre's "bold and wholly unsubstantiated assertion," that is precisely the purpose of human sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> In order not to die, we kill another animal; in order not to lose something, we give it away.

Jan Heesterman takes a different approach to the close affinities between suicidal self-sacrifice and the "authentic" sacrifice of the self, noting that the latter turns on substitution and the nature of the victim chosen as surrogate:

What emerges from the ritual and from ritualist speculation is that self-sacrifice as such is invalid.... Sacrifice, on the other hand, cannot be valid by immolating just any victim that presents itself. The person, animal, or substance that is immolated must be that part of the sacrificer that defines him as such, namely the goods of life he has acquired by risking his own life.... Without this bond uniting the sacrificer and his victim, sacrifice would be as invalid as self-sacrifice is *per se*.<sup>7</sup>

Insofar as self-sacrifice *qua* sacrifice remains "symbolic," a substitute victim, which nevertheless must be "identified" with what it signifies, is obviously required. Lévi has thus termed sacrifice a "subterfuge."<sup>8</sup> But the substitution of another for the self does serve to distinguish sacrifice from one set of closely related phenomena: suicide, martyrdom, and all other literal forms of self-death.

Other theorists have emphasized the other side of sacrificial substitution—displaced violence toward another. In this view, sacrifice is defined not in relation to other forms of self-death, but rather in relation to other forms of murder (homicide as well as deicide); and in either case it is by virtue of the substitute that sacrifice is set apart from (i.e., made "sacred" in relation to) these other (and "profane") killings.

Sigmund Freud, in his brief but brilliant reflections on sacrifice at the end of *Totem and Taboo*, understood the sacrificial victim as only *consciously* the substitute for the sacrificer (although the element of the sacrificer's "renunciation"—of the egoistic and selfish will as well as of healthy independence—he found very significant indeed, and characteristic of religion as a whole). He argued, however, that

the victim was also an *unconscious* representation of or substitute for the deity, the figure of authority, the idealized all-powerful father figure. Sacrifice is, for Freud, simultaneously a conscious renunciation of independence (that is, a kind of self-death), performed out of guilt generated from repressed feelings of hostility and resentment toward the authority figure, and an unconscious display of those same feelings as the authority figure, in the guise of the victim, is slaughtered and consumed (i.e., murdered).

We find that the ambivalence implicit in the father-complex persists in totemism and in religions generally. Totemic religion not only comprised expressions of remorse and attempts at atonement, it also served as a remembrance of the triumph over the father.... Thus it became a duty to repeat the crime of parricide again and again in the sacrifice of the totem animal, whenever, as a result of the changing conditions of life, the cherished fruit of the crime—appropriation of the paternal attributes—threatened to disappear.<sup>9</sup>

For Freud, sacrifice is shot through with ambivalence toward authority, and most especially toward the apotheosis of the father. It is stimulated by guilt stemming from Oedipal wishes, and it alleviates that guilt by providing a means for renouncing such wishes; but it also perpetuates and reproduces guilt by giving expression, through the killing of the substitute, the sacrificial victim, to the Oedipal fantasy of killing the father.

We are ambivalent toward the object of sacrifice, the god (father) for whom the sacrifice is designated; we feed him (to please him, because we love him) and we eat him (to kill him, because we hate him.) Indeed, eating may also be regarded as a way of appropriating him—of *becoming him ourselves* because we admire him so (a justification that cannibals are often said to apply to their own habits).

A more recent work, indebted in many ways to Freud, on sacrifice and substitution is René Girard's *Violence and the Sacred*. Where Hubert and Mauss and Freud saw the victim as doubly representative (of both sacrificer and god in the first instance, and of the object of both love and hate in the second), Girard speaks of a "double substitution" in the ritual. Following Freud, Girard places substitution at the very center of sacrifice and sees violence (repressed and expressed) as the key to the ritual. He writes of a "fundamental truth about violence; if left unappeased violence will

accumulate until it overflows its confines and floods the surrounding area. The role of sacrifice is to stem this rising tide of indiscriminate substitution and redirect violence into 'proper' channels.'<sup>10</sup>

This rechanneling is accomplished by distancing violence from its true object. Such a displacement is brought about in two stages. First, the violence of the group as a whole is projected onto a scapegoat, a member of the community. This person is to be thrown to the wolves, as it were, to appease their hunger—and the wolves here have human rather than divine faces, being none other than the members of the community itself. But, secondly, a "ritual victim" is interjected as a substitute for the "sacrificial" or "surrogate" victim, which is, it will be recalled, itself the substitute for communal violence which always threatens to explode into an endless series of atrocities and acts of retribution. "Society is seeking to deflect upon a relatively indifferent victim, a 'sacrificial' victim, the violence that would otherwise be vented on its own members, the people it most desires to protect."<sup>11</sup>

The cycle of violence is thus short-circuited by the double substitution which at once conceals and represents the real victim<sup>12</sup> as it transfers the violence from the real victim to a surrogate and then again to a ritual substitute. This byzantine chain of displacement is summed up thus:

The ritual victim is never substituted for some particular member of the community or even for the community as a whole: *it is always substituted for the surrogate victim*. As this victim itself serves as a substitute for all the members of the community, the sacrificial substitute does indeed play the role that we have attributed to it, protecting all the members of the community from their respective violence—but always through the intermediary of the surrogate victim.... Ritual sacrifice is founded on a double substitution. The first, which passes unperceived, is the substitution of one member of the community for all, brought about through the operation of the surrogate victim. The second, the only truly 'ritualistic' substitution, is superimposed on the first. It is the substitution of a victim belonging to a predetermined sacrificial category for the original victim. The surrogate victim comes from inside the community, and the ritual victim must come from outside.<sup>13</sup>

Girard's hypothesis finds a certain amount of support in ancient Indian ritual texts, as we shall soon see. For now, we might point to the earliest sources describing the Vedic horse sacrifice, in which there actually are double victims (indeed, two doubles): the horse,

the ultimate victim, is accompanied by a most literal scapegoat—a goat—that is slaughtered with him (RV 1.162.2-4), and, later, by a dog, a ritually unclean animal, onto whom the evil of the sacrificer is projected (TB 3.8.4.2). Indeed, this doubling of the horse is sometimes still more complicated. Instead of two other animals, two *groups* of animals, wild and tame, are bound to the stake, and the tame are killed while the wild are set free. As the process of substitution escalates, the number of victims subsidiary to the horse increases to as many as 111 and 180.<sup>14</sup> This is *dédoublement* with a vengeance.

The victim, Girard notes, is identified with the deity, and is for this reason, among others, regarded as sacred. But he also notes that a paradox arises because of the victim's sacrality: "Because the victim is sacred, it is criminal to kill him—but the victim is sacred only because he is to be killed."<sup>15</sup> The second surrogate, the "ritualistic" substitute victim, is often an animal; but Girard strangely regards this as a matter of no consequence: "In the general study of sacrifice there is little reason to differentiate between human and animal victims.... Strictly speaking, there is no essential difference between animal sacrifice and human sacrifice, and in many cases one is substituted for the other."<sup>16</sup> This assertion, however, seems to be contradicted by myths of human sacrifice that go to great lengths to explain precisely why the sacrifice of an animal is *not* the same as (though it may well be the substitute for) the sacrifice of a human. Thus, for instance, in the tale of Śunaḥśepa (AitB 7.13-18), the boy who is about to be sacrificed protests, "They are going to slaughter me as if I were not a human being," and eventually makes them sacrifice a Soma plant instead.<sup>17</sup>

Whether conceived as a transaction leading to communication between the sacred and profane (Hubert and Mauss), or as a kind of self-death leading to a new birth, or as a violent expression and displacement of hostility toward another (the god/father with Freud, the community and its members with Girard), the general conclusions regarding sacrifice coincide. For all, sacrifice is defined by substitution. It is, in the first place, a substitute for an impossible or prohibited real act, such as the actual coalescence of the divine and the human, a real suicide, or unritualized violent agres-

sion and murder. All substitutions within a sacrificial ritual are therefore substitutions for a prior, and definitive, substitution.

Secondly, all theorists considered here emphasize the critical importance of the victim to the sacrificial process, and all see this victim as a multivalent substitute and symbol for a pair of opposites: the sacred and the profane, god and the human, recipient and giver, father and son, society as a whole and its individual members. The substitute victim is, as a symbol, a representative of two (or more) different and even contradictory things or beings.

And because it is a symbol, it is not critical to the efficacy of the sacrificial process itself who or what is selected to act as the symbol, the victim. It could be, and in the comparative view, is, almost anything: humans (of any number of culturally constituted types), animals, vegetables, nonsentient physical objects, physiological functions (as in the "sacrifice of breath" in the Upaniṣads), even ideas ("individuality," "desire," "faith," "truth," etc.) can and do function as the symbolic victim.

This is not to say, however, that within particular cultures and particular religious traditions the choice of the appropriate victim is left to the whims of individuals. Far from it. The appropriate sacrificial victims are, as Girard says, "predetermined." Still, the fact remains that substitute victims of all kinds populate the sacrificial arena. The proliferation of surrogates in sacrificial rituals, such as we have seen in the multiplication of subsidiary victims in the ancient Indian horse sacrifice, may be compared to the proliferation of variants (or fragments, or overlapping mythemes) in the myths that so often gloss these sacrifices. In both cases, this fragmenting and proliferation is necessitated by the worshipper's inability to deal with the problem directly. In the myth, it indicates that one cannot state the problem outright, and hence introduces a series of fragmentary statements.<sup>18</sup> In the ritual, it means that one hesitates to sacrifice oneself or another directly, and hence interposes a series of surrogates.

If substitution is in fact the key to the sacrifice, then the only thing that the victim will never stand for is itself (more precisely, itself alone: a goat may symbolize goats in general as well as a goat-god or the owner of the goat). Seen in these terms, the theory of

sacrifice is merely a branch of the more general theory of symbolism, and any and every insightful approach to symbolism will help us to understand the sacrifice (and vice versa). This being so, Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* is as important as his *Totem and Taboo* for the question of sacrifice and substitution.

One may also, of course, turn for insights into the nature of sacrifice and substitution to the rituals and myths of sacrificial traditions themselves. The ancient Indian example is a particularly instructive one in that it explores at some depth, and sometimes in unexpected ways, the theoretical intricacies of sacrifice.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. *Vedic Theories of Substitution in Sacrifice*

In the texts of the ancient Indian religion known as Vedism—or, better, Vedic ritualism—as well as in subsequent Hindu thinking about sacrifice, we encounter people inside one particular religious tradition wrestling with the complexities, even conundrums, of sacrifice and substitution. While some of the topics that the ritualists focussed on are familiar to us from the discussion above, others have not yet sufficiently been brought to the attention of those who are interested in the general questions entailed by sacrifice and substitution.

Vedic ritualism was first and foremost an exercise in and the product of a particularly contoured homological mode of thought. Supposedly resembling entities and phenomena were linked by “connections” (*bandhus* or *nidānas*) and human beings could therefore claim to understand and to exert an influence on the natural, supernatural, and social realms from within the confines of their ritual world. Put otherwise, ritual action on ritually codified (and wholly accessible) things and beings was said, by means of the connections, to work simultaneously and sympathetically on their natural, supernatural, and social analogues.

Vedic ritualism in its entirety, like “sacrifice” as a category within the study of religion, is thus based on and made possible by substitution. The theology, metaphysics, and ontology created by the Vedic ritualists presume the inaccessibility of transcendent prototypes—and the necessity of ritual action using counterparts or symbols for the “real thing.” It was therefore critical for the



ritualists to know the answer to the question posed succinctly in the R̥g Veda: “What was the transcendent prototype (*pramā*), what was the immanent counterpart (*pratimā*), and what was the connection (*nidāna*) between them?” (RV 10.130.3).

At the most general level, the sacrificial ritual as a whole is a counterpart of the transcendent Cosmic one, Prajāpati or Puruṣa, who has created the ritual as a *pratimā* of himself; thus the texts repeatedly tell us that “the sacrifice is Prajāpati.”<sup>20</sup> The sacrifice and Prajāpati are counterforms of each other, and the creator god is no different from the cosmic whole. So it is that “this all,” which is Prajāpati, corresponds to (or results from, *anu*) the sacrifice (ŚB 3.6.3.1). Furthermore, because both the sacrifice and the year are counterparts of the same prototypical Prajāpati, they are themselves linked on a common chain of resembling surrogates: the sacrifice has “the same measure” (*sammita*) as the year.<sup>21</sup>

The components of the sacrifice are said to be resembling forms of cosmic prototypes (each element of the ritual being vertically connected to transcendent correlatives), and the sacrifice as a whole is the counterpart to the prototype that is Prajāpati, the universe: “Deux plans, mais un être,” as Paul Mus has put it.<sup>22</sup> The sacrifice operates with “images” while Prajāpati’s body or self is comprised of the “originals,” but both participate in the same ontological essence.<sup>23</sup>

Counterparts are only in this sense to be regarded as “substitutes.” They “stand for” or “represent” their originals in that they are more or less incomplete images or emanations of them. A series of resembling forms, from the prototype to its least complete manifestation, comprise the elements within a set. The *pratimā* of Prajāpati is the year, the cosmic whole on the temporal plane; and the counterpart of the year is the sacrifice of twelve days duration because “the year has twelve months, and this is the *pratimā* of the year” (KB 25.15; KS 7.15). A sacrifice lasting a whole year would of course be more fully the form of Prajāpati conceived of temporally, but one of twelve days can also serve the purpose and participate in the form albeit less completely.

The doctrine of counterparts makes possible both ritual efficacy—the manipulation of ritual counterparts in order to influence cosmic prototypes—and ritual efficiency: “The gods said,

‘Find the sacrifice that will be the *pratimā* for one of a thousand years, for what man is there who could get through with a sacrifice lasting a thousand years?’” (ŚB 12.3.3.5). Human beings can participate in rituals of cosmic dimensions by means of resembling sacrifices gauged to the human condition—again, not with the completeness of the original but with the efficacy and efficiency of the counterpart. Sacrifice itself, then, is in Vedic philosophy a substitute for a cosmic operation and prototypical activity that always lies outside the grasp of human practitioners. From this point of view no less than from the point of view of the modern theorists, sacrifice is always a substitute for an unattainable (or undesirable) ideal.

The sacrifice in Vedism is also, as Paul Mus writes, “une contrepartie et un substitut personnel pour l’homme qui l’offre.”<sup>24</sup> “The man is the sacrifice,” it is said in a Brāhmaṇa. “The man is the sacrifice because it is the man who offers it. And each time he offers it, the sacrifice takes the shape of the man. Therefore the sacrifice is the man” (ŚB 1.3.2.1; 3.5.3.1; cf. TS 5.2.5.1). In this instance, the sacrificial ritual functions as a kind of representation of the very life of the sacrificer; the ritual substitutes for the real life of the one who offers it.

The sacrifice is thus regarded as the counterpart not only of the creator god and of the cosmos as a whole but also of the sacrificer himself. But if the sacrificer is in this way connected to the sacrifice—which is, it will be remembered, a counterpart of the creator god—it is not surprising that the sacrificer is also said to be “nearest to” (*nediṣṭha*) the prototypical Prajāpati.<sup>25</sup> Man and god are “identified” explicitly in Vedic ritualism;<sup>26</sup> the sacrificer, like the sacrifice, is a manifest counterpart of the ineffable creator god.

In relation to others, however, the sacrificer himself functions as a prototype with his own counterparts. A chain of potential substitutes for the sacrificer is thus created. An animal, more nearly resembling the sacrificer than vegetable oblations, in its turn stands as the prototype in relation to the lesser forms within the series. In this manner, the baked cake (*puroḍāśa*) is the counterpart of the sacrificial animal (*paśu*), and, following the chain, also therefore the *pratimā* of the sacrificer (TB 3.2.8.8). The sacrificer and his oblation are in this way analogues of one another. And because of their affinity, the sacrificer is said to offer a form of himself when he

offers clarified butter, the sacrificial cake, or an animal; for “by virtue of the counterpart (*pratimayā*) it is the man” (KB 10.3). Or, again, the relation of resemblance between the sacrificer and the animal victim within his sacrifice is sometimes described as one in which there is a metaphysical connection (*nidāna*).<sup>27</sup> There is no prelogical confusion here between the sacrificer and his victim, any more than there is a confusion between the transcendent god and the cosmic whole, on the one hand, and the sacrificial ritual performed here by humans on the other. The offering is not identical to the sacrificer but is his projected representative.

But all counterparts, all representatives, are not created equal, and are not regarded as such; sacrificial victims are also not all equal in their ability to represent the prototype. The technical texts on the ritual, when listing the possible replacements for any given original component of the sacrifice, do so with a clear order of preference based on the strength of the resemblance of the species to the genus,<sup>28</sup> and also with an explicit hierarchy of rewards: “In any performance (wherein optional injunctions are prescribed), the higher the choice the higher the fruit” (KŚS 1.10).

The hierarchical nature of the lists of substitutes is perhaps most obviously exemplified in the discussion of substitutes for the *dakṣiṇā* or “sacrificial fee” offered to the officiating priests by the sacrificer. In BŚS (28.13), it is said that the standard *dakṣiṇā* for a sacrifice is comprised of a cow, some gold, and a garment—obviously a gift of some expense (and in some sacrifices the *dakṣiṇās* are far more costly). If these items are “unavailable,” the text continues, a much more modest (and inferior) substitute is prescribed: a gift of edible fruits and roots. “If even this not [within reach of the sacrificer],” the teacher concludes (perhaps with some exasperation), “he should not offer the sacrifice.” Just as one could not offer a sacrifice to the gods without providing some (indeed, almost any) oblation in the fire for them, so one is prohibited from sacrificing without offering something to the Brahmin priests, the “human gods.” And it may not be out of place here to recall who the creators of these ritual rules were.

Such a hierarchical gradation of counterparts which may function as substitutes for an original can also be observed when one looks at lists of sacrificial victims or *paśus*. One such enumeration

is found in a passage whose purpose is to explain the etymology of the term “*paśu*”:

Prajāpati turned his attention to the forms (*rūpas*) of Agni. He searched for that boy<sup>29</sup> who had entered into the [various] forms [of Agni]. Agni becomes aware [of this and thought], Father Prajāpati is searching for me. I will take a form unrecognizable to him.’ He saw those five sacrificial victims: man, horse, bull, ram, and goat. Because he saw (*paśyat*) [them], they are therefore *paśus*. He entered these five sacrificial victims and became these five sacrificial victims (ŚB 6.2.1.1-3).

Later in that same text, another passage makes it clear that the order in which the *paśus* are listed is not accidental, but rather is one calibrated to the relative “excellence” of each victim:

He offers the man first, for man is the first of the *paśus*; then [he offers] the horse, for the horse comes after the man; then the bull, for the bull comes after the horse; then the ram, for the ram comes after the bull; then the goat, for the goat comes after the ram. In this way he offers them, in hierarchical succession (*yathāpūrvam*) according to their relative excellence (*yathāśreṣṭham*) (ŚB 6.2.1.18).

Man (*puruṣa*) is thus proclaimed as the highest and most desirable of all possible sacrificial victims; in Vedism, as in sacrificial theory elsewhere, the paradigmatic sacrifice is self-sacrifice. Not only is man listed first in the various enumerations of the *paśus*; he is also extolled by texts which place him closest to the deity, to Prajāpati. The human *paśu*, being “nearest to” Prajāpati, is therefore the best substitute for the primordial victim, the creator god himself.<sup>30</sup> The superiority of the human victim is underlined in one account by claiming that he is “all *paśus*,” that is, he encompasses them all by virtue of his hierarchically superior rank (and note again the order in which the *paśus* are listed):

Prajāpati at first was one. He desired, ‘May I emit food, may I be reproduced.’ He measured out the *paśus* from his breaths. From his mind [he measured out] the man; from his eye, the horse; from his breath, the bull; from his ear, the ram; from his voice, the goat. And since he measured them out from his breaths, they say ‘The *paśus* are the breaths.’ And since he measured out the man from his mind, they say ‘The man is the first, the most potent (*vīryavattama*) of the *paśus*.’ The mind is all the breaths, for all the breaths are firmly established in the mind. And since he measured out the man from his mind, they say, ‘The man is all *paśus*,’ for they all become the man’s (ŚB 7.5.4.6).

In relation to the other *paśus*, however, the sacrificer himself functions as the prototypical victim, with the other animals as

inferior substitutes for or counterparts of man.<sup>31</sup> The fact that there are surrogates for the human sacrificer/victim, in turn, makes it possible to conceive of the sacrifice as categorically different from suicide—indeed, as precisely a ritual inversion of suicide. It may now be viewed as an act which “redeems” the sacrificer from death and increases his longevity:

When he sacrifices with the animal sacrifice, he renews the fires. And along with renewing the fires, the sacrificer renews himself, and along with the sacrificer, his house and *paśu*. The redemption of his self (by offering the animal substitute) is for his longevity. For while he is sacrificing, the fires of the sacrificer hunger for meat. They turn their attention to the sacrificer himself; they long for the sacrificer. People cook meat taken at random in various other fires, but these (sacrificial fires) look for no other meat than that of him to whom they (the fires) belong. He who sacrifices with the animal sacrifice redeems himself—a male for a male. For the *paśu* is a male, and the sacrificer is a male. This meat is the best food. He becomes the eater of the best food (ŚB 11.7.1.2-3).

In this passage, there is a frank recognition that, according to the principles of Vedic ritualism itself, the sacrifice (or, more exactly, the sacrificial fire) anticipates the sacrificer himself as the victim: the fires “long for the sacrificer.” And the animal stand-in, as it is again quite frankly recognized in the text, is a ransom for the life of the sacrificer.<sup>32</sup> The sacrifice *is* a sacrifice, and not a suicide (or a “murder” of the sacrificer by the fire), because of this displacement and replacement made possible by the substitute victim.

In yet another narrative concerning the types and relative ranking of the sacrificial victims, the familiar hierarchical order—from man, the highest form of *paśu*, to the goat, the lowest on the scale—is reiterated. The enumeration appears in the course of relating how the quality that constitutes all of these animals as worthy of sacrifice (their *medha*) entered into and then left them, creating in its wake new but defective forms of each. In this text, however, we are also introduced to another component of the Vedic theory of sacrifice and substitution. For although it is clear that the *paśu*s are hierarchically ranked, the lowest on the hierarchical ladder is also said here to be the victim most often used, and in some ways, the best victim:<sup>33</sup>

The gods offered man as sacrificial victim. Then the sacrificial quality passed out of the offered man. It entered the horse. Then the horse became fit for sacrifice and they dismissed him whose sacrificial quality had passed out of

him. He [the former man, now devoid of the sacrificial quality] became a defective man (*kimpuruṣa*).<sup>34</sup> They offered the horse, and the sacrificial quality passed out of the offered horse. It entered the cow... It [the former horse] became the wild *bos guarus* (*gauramṛga*). They offered the bull... The sacrificial quality entered the ram... It [the former bull] became the *bos gavaeus* (*gavaya*). They offered the ram... The sacrificial quality entered the goat... It [the former ram] became the camel (*uṣṭra*). It [the sacrificial quality] stayed the longest in the goat; therefore the goat is the *paśu* most often used [as sacrificial victim]. They offered up the goat, and it (the sacrificial quality) passed out of the goat. It entered this (earth), and therefore this (earth) became fit for sacrifice. They dismissed him whose sacrificial quality had passed out of him. He [the former goat] became the wild *śarabha*. These *paśus* whose sacrificial quality had passed out of them became unfit for sacrifice. Therefore one should not eat them.<sup>35</sup>

The curious fact, and the one that the theorists have not sufficiently prepared us for, is that in this myth the least “excellent” of the *paśus*, the goat, is presented as not only the one “most often used” but also the one most saturated with the quality that constitutes a sacrificial victim as such, the *medha*. This peculiar virtue of the least desirable and hierarchically most inferior victim is corroborated in other texts as well. One, for example, distinguishes the goat by claiming that it possesses the essences of all the other (and hierarchically superior) *paśus*—thus turning on its head the earlier cited text which claimed, in accord with the expected, that man, the highest *paśu*, encompasses all other victims:

In this *paśu* [the goat] is the form (*rūpa*) of all *paśus*. The form of man [incorporated in the goat] is what is hornless and bearded, for man is hornless and bearded. The form of the horse is what possesses a mane, for the horse possesses a mane. The form of the bull is what is eight-hoofed, for the bull has eight hoofs [four cloven hoofs]. The form of the ram is what possesses ram hoofs, for the ram possesses ram hoofs. What is the goat, that is [the form] of the goat. Thus, when he offers this [goat], he offers all those *paśus* (ŚB 6.2.2.15; cf. TS 2.1.1.4-5; 5.5.1.2).

The least worthy animal substitute is here said to recapitulate all members of the class of substitutes. Nor does this process of concentrating the sacrificial quality into lower and more easily expendable objects in the category stop with the goat.

When, according to the myth, the sacrificial quality finally left the goat after its longish residency, “it entered this earth. They searched for it by digging. They found it as those two, rice and barley (*vrihi* and *yava*). Thus even now they find those two by digging.” And further, these lowly victims, these vegetable “*paśus*,”

are said to “possess as much potency (*vīryavat*) as all the sacrificed *paśus* would have” (ŚB 1.2.3.7; cf. MS 3.10.2). A variant tells much the same story:

They follow it [the sacrificial essence] into this [earth]; it, being followed, became rice. When they offer the rice cake in the animal sacrifice, [they do so thinking], ‘May our sacrifice be done with a *paśu* possessing the sacrificial quality; may our sacrifice be done with a fully constituted (*kevala*) *paśu*.’ His sacrifice becomes one done with a *paśu* possessing the sacrificial quality; the sacrifice of one who knows this becomes one done with a fully constituted *paśu*. When the rice cake [is offered], it is indeed a *paśu* which is offered up. Its stringy chaff, that is the hairs; its husk is the skin; the flour is the blood; the small grains are the flesh; whatever is the best part [of the grain] is the bone. He sacrifices with the sacrificial quality of all *paśus* who sacrifices with the rice cake (AitB 2.8-9).

How are we to understand these claims for the lowest *paśus*—the very lowest being no more than simple vegetables—as the recapitulation and apparent equal of the highest sacrificial victims? It would seem that here the hierarchical order of things has been overturned and rendered meaningless. Indeed, in the same text in which the *paśus* are enumerated, and sacrificed, “in hierarchical succession (*yathāpūrvam*) according to their relative excellence (*yathāśreṣṭham*)” (ŚB 6.2.1.18), it is also declared that the five “all should be the same (*samāh*), they all should be equal (*sadṛśyāh*); for all these are the same, all these are equal, in that they are called ‘Agnis,’ in that they are all called ‘food’; because of that they are the same, because of that they are equal” (ŚB 6.2.1.19).

What are we to make of this apparent contradiction? On the one hand, the goat is not equal to the other *paśus*; on the other hand, the goat is said to be not only their equal but, indeed, in some sense the best of all victims. But rather than the inversion of a hierarchical order of mutually resembling entities, what we encounter here is a feature of that very system. For if there is no question that the substitute in Vedism is not the full equal of the original, it is also recognized that the original, more often than not, is wholly inaccessible. The inaccessibility of the original does not logically make the goat equal, let alone better; but it does make its use inevitable. And in order to justify this unavoidable reality, the texts simply *say* that the goat is just as good or—on the principle that one might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, as it were—even

better. Here is another example of unavoidable ritual obfuscation; we will encounter still others before the end of the argument.

We have seen that sacrifice as a whole is but a replica of cosmic processes quite out of reach of direct human control. We have also seen that the best victim (the deity and/or the sacrificer himself) is precisely the one that cannot be used in the sacrifice if it is really to remain a “sacrifice” and not a crime. Yet another example of this phenomenon of the inaccessibility of what should be used in sacrifice—an inaccessibility that thereby necessitates a substitution—is the employment of the *pūtīkā* plant and others in place of the Soma plant. This substitution, already allowed in the earliest Vedic texts (e.g., TB 1.4.7.5 ff.; JB. 1.354; PB 9.5.2 ff.; ŚB 4.5.10.1 ff), may have been required because the original Soma was unknown, or often unavailable, or possibly never existed at all.<sup>36</sup> Soma became a kind of transcendent prototype early on; in this case, as in others, both the “original” and the “substitute” were counterparts of an inaccessible substance.

Extolling the substitute as the “equal” of the original is, one might say, a strategem for constituting it as a proper substitute. So it is that, according to the ritual texts, a replacement is to be treated in the same way as the original would have been. All the characteristic features, and all the preparatory rites which make the substance fit for sacrifice, are transferred to the substitute (ĀpŚS 24.3.53). The mantras recited for the original also remain unchanged when there is a substitute: references in the prescribed verse to the original (e.g. “Soma” or “goat”) are kept even when a substitute is being used (e.g., *pūtīkā* for Soma, or a cake for a goat) (ŚŚS 3.20.11; ĀśvŚS 3.2.19; KŚS 1.4.9-10).

But while the substitute thus comes to function as if it were the original, the fact that it *is* a substitute and not the original is never forgotten. If the replacement for an original should for some reason become unusable in the course of the performance of the sacrifice, the secondary substitution should be made on the basis of its resemblance to the original, and not on the basis of a similarity to the substitute (KŚS 1.4.15). “There can be no substitute for a substitute,” as S. C. Chakrabarti notes.<sup>37</sup> This point may constitute a Vedic exception to Girard’s general rule. In this theory of sacrificial substitution, it will be recalled, the “ritual substitute”



stands in for a “surrogate victim” or scapegoat which is itself a substitute for a “real victim.” The Vedic rule, by prohibiting substitutes for substitutes, seems to disallow Girard’s formula.

Substitution in Vedic ritualism, in any event, is regarded as something of a necessary evil. While the texts make it clear that the ritualists know how a perfect sacrifice would be done, they also realize that such perfection is out of reach in rituals performed by human beings.<sup>38</sup> The important thing, however, is that the sacrifice continue to be performed, even if it is a mere facsimile of the genuine article. And so, the texts declare, *nitya* or obligatory sacrifices may be done with any number of substitutions, as long as they are done: “Thus, with a root, some fruit, honey or meat, the obligatory sacrifices are to be performed continually. And [thereby] one does not interrupt the obligatory sacrifices” (BŚS 28.13).

We may be here observing, by the way, one of the early roots of the later Hindu theory of *āpad dharma*, where the normal duties of the various castes are suspended in “times of emergency.” Indeed, the laws of *dharma* and the laws of ritual are both extremely complex, detailed, and demanding; perhaps for this very reason the law-makers provided various escape hatches to allow for their all-too-human frailty and the vagaries of life. Substitutions may be made before beginning an obligatory sacrifice, and the reasons for so doing so include, as in the case of *āpad dharma*, various exigencies in times of distress or the unavailability of certain required materials.<sup>39</sup> Or they may be made after the sacrifice has already been started (e.g., when certain of the necessary materials have become spoiled, lost, or otherwise rendered unusable) (HŚS 3.1).

Substitution in the Vedic ritual texts entails not only a subsequent assumption of equivalency (making the best of a bad situation, the substitute is treated in the ritual as if it were the original), but a process of *simplification*: the replacement is in every case a simplified, more easily attainable, less expensive version of the original. In all instances, the chain of acceptable substitutes moves from the most complex, highly valued, and rare, to the simpler, less costly, and more common. Such chains always end with the *minimally acceptable*. And this is, we would suggest, precisely what is assumed in and lies behind those Vedic texts that speak of the “identification” between the lower and the higher.

Furthermore, this sort of minimalism presented as equivalency is not simply a quirk of one aspect of the sacrifice but, rather, is a frequently encountered aspect of Vedic ritualism. The presentation of the smaller, the less adequate, and the abbreviated as the “equal” of the larger, the fully appropriate, and the unabridged is an integral feature of the philosophy of hierarchical resemblance which underlies the whole Vedic ritual system;<sup>40</sup> and, indeed, one might even more generally say that the whole of ritual symbolism is also founded on such a notion.

Vedic resemblance, in sum, allows for basically two different kinds of substitutions, two kinds of ritual condensations, both of which entail a kind of synecdochic reductionism (whereby a part of the whole represents the whole), but differ as to what kind of part is made to represent the whole. The first type of this synecdoche, which is readily understandable in hierarchical terms, is the encompassment of the condensed essences of the lesser within the greater—a condensation *upward*, so to speak. We have observed above such a claim for the human victim, which is said to encompass within it all other *paśus*; a similar claim is made for the Soma sacrifice, which is supposed to contain within it all other sacrifices, both the lower and the higher (AitB 4.40-41). Elsewhere the Soma sacrifice is said to be the “the most perfect” (*sampannatama*) of all Vedic rituals on account of its all-encompassing nature (AitĀ 2.3.3). Other rituals are similarly advertized. The rites within the Agnicayana are assimilated to all the rituals of the Vedic repertoire, and thus “he obtains all the sacrifices with the Agnicayana” (ŚB 10.1.5.1-3). The Rājasūya has the same capacity: “He who offers the Rājasūya envelopes all sacrificial rituals” (ŚB 5.2.3.9). Such great rituals make their claim to superiority in part by virtue of the fact that they encompass within them the condensed kernels of all other Vedic sacrifices.<sup>41</sup>

The second form of condensation within Vedic resemblance is less obviously in harmony with hierarchical presuppositions, and is less often accounted for in theoretical discussions about sacrifice and substitution. This is a condensation *downward* of the essences of the superior which are then reprised within inferior “equivalents.” Claims of equivalency between “great” prototypes and their condensed counterparts can, however, also be explicated in

terms of hierarchical resemblance. They serve to unite Vedic ritualism from top to bottom, and vice versa. Such homologies are not intended to *collapse distinctions*, but rather to *strengthen connections* between interrelated entities and phenomena. In this system, even the smallest and relatively weakest may function as a resembling counterpart to the greatest and most complete. The inferior is not here regarded as an *equivalent replacement* for, but rather only as a *condensed representative* of, its superior relative within a class.

The Vedic texts, then, are a rich lode of data on sacrifice and substitution. There is, first, a recognition among the authors of these texts that the act of sacrifice is essentially a substitution for a prototypical, cosmic act that humans cannot precisely reduplicate but can only more or less adequately replicate. Second, there is also an admission that sacrifice is an act of displacement of violence onto a substitute victim that prevents the real victim of the sacrificial ideology, the sacrificer and/or deity, from suffering the consequences of the sacrificial ideal. Third, the Vedic material also exemplifies the confusion of identities necessary to the sacrificial operation and to the series of substitutions integral to sacrifice. The sacrifice as a whole, the deity, the sacrificer, the animal and the vegetable victims are all thoroughly conflated.

But, fourth and most importantly, the Vedic “science of ritual” also emphasizes that hierarchical distinctions are never lost in the process of sacrificial conflations and surrogations. Sacrificial substitution is guided, and indeed made possible, by ontological and metaphysical resemblance; but the difference between prototypes and counterparts, and between counterparts of differing degrees of resemblance to the prototypical original, is never forgotten or denied.

#### 4. *Sacrifice and Substitution in Hinduism*

These many varieties of religious substitutions in the Vedic texts are themselves “simplified” and reduced in later Hinduism in two basic ways that then serve as justifications for new Hindu practices.

The first of these is the argument by necessity. As we have seen, the Vedic texts describe substitutions of a most practical sort: if one could not for some reason obtain a certain substance, another could

be used in its place. The Veda itself came to be regarded as, on the one hand, something which *could be* used as a substitute and, on the other, something for which there *had to be*, by necessity, a substitute. Thus, the Veda, in the concrete form of a manuscript or printed text, could be treated as a physical object of veneration within a temple, the sacred scripture functioning in this way as a kind of stand-in for an image of the deity. Since, however, the content of the text has long been unknown to all but a small minority of Hindus, and is largely irrelevant to Hindu doctrine and practice, other scriptures that claimed to be simplified versions of the Veda were by necessity substituted for the original.<sup>42</sup> Further, the ritual described in the Veda also came to be regarded as an inaccessible original. In later Hinduism the mere *recitation* of the Veda, with or without comprehension of meaning, is regarded as the simplified equivalent of the actual performance of a Vedic sacrifice.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, in a sense it might be said that all subsequent Hindu ritual is a substitute for the Vedic sacrifice; Hinduism is, from this point of view, a necessary substitution for a religion rendered impossible by the decline of human ability in the Kali Yuga or dark age. Hinduism, in other words, might be regarded as a gigantic exercise in *āpad dharma*, a way of proceeding in an “emergency.”

One may view sacrifice in the history of post-Vedic Indian religion not so much as a ritual act or set of acts but rather as a category which acts to provide explanatory power, traditional legitimacy, and canonical authority in Indian history.<sup>44</sup> It is perhaps one of only two such categories which can perform such a canonical function in Hindu religious life, the other being the closely related category Veda.

Vedic sacrifice thus provides a basic category that Hinduism inherits and continues to cherish—but not always uncritically. Where in Vedism *all* sacrificial substitution is justified on the grounds of necessity, in Hinduism at least some substitutions are rationalized on an ethical basis. This is the second form of the justification of Hindu beliefs and practices, the argument by morality. Thus, while in Vedic ritual texts, the vegetable offerings may have to serve as the substitute victim because of, say, economic necessity, in Hinduism offerings of rice and barley are claimed to be *better* than those of animals, because they avoid the sin of killing.

The uneasiness associated with the ritual slaughter of animals may be traced back to the Vedic texts themselves. When the sacrificial narratives come to the point of actually killing the victim, the prose becomes heavily euphemistic and mystifying.

They then go back again (to the altar) and sit down turning towards the *āhavanīya* fire, “so that they should not be spectators of its being made to acquiesce (to its own death, *saṃjñāpyamāna*).” They do not kill (*praghnanti*) it by (striking it on) the forehead, like humans, nor behind the ear, for that is the way (of killing) among the ancestors. They either keep its mouth closed (and thus suffocate it), or they make a noose (and strangle it to death). Thus he does not say, “Kill! (*jahi*), put it to death (*mārayeti*)!” for that is the way of humans. (Rather, he says) “Make it acquiesce! It has passed away!” for that is the way of the gods. For when he says, “It has passed away,” then this one (the victim of the sacrificer) passes away to the gods. Therefore he says, “It has passed away” (ŚB 3.8.1.15).

The reluctance to face the horrific reality of human beings profanely killing animals in the sacred ritual leads the Brahmins to imagine that they are operating in the morally pure universe of the divine: they do not “kill” like humans but, like the gods, they make the victim “acquiesce” to its own death or “make it pass away.”

But this disquieted conscience concerning sacrificial slaughter does not completely come out of the ritual closet until Hinduism is in full spate, in the Purāṇic period. At that time, it takes the form of a corpus of Hindu myths about Vedic sacrifice—myths that simultaneously legitimate Hindu practices by presenting them in the guise of Vedic paradigms while they undercut, often by quite sharp satire, the entire rationale for one of the pillars of the Vedic sacrifice: the killing of animals.

There are many Hindu myths about sacrifice, some of which depict the ritualization of the paradox of the hunting of the tame animal.<sup>45</sup> This paradox may be designed to restore to the grim and often guilt-laden butchery of tame animals some of the glamor and martial eroticism characteristic of hunting. It is by no means clear that all hunters or sacrificers experience guilt or regret at the death of the animal. But some evidently do have some misgivings, by their own testimony (or at least the testimony of their Brahmin priests). The sacrificial experts of ancient India included a rationale of ritual killing specifically aimed at obviating such guilt: a young

boy who travelled to the other world saw people being eaten by animals (and, indeed, by vegetables) whom they had improperly killed and eaten in life. The way to avoid such a fate, he was told, was to perform the correct ritual before killing such an animal (or vegetable).<sup>46</sup> Another common ploy was to say that the animal willingly sacrificed itself (JB 2.182-183). On other occasions an attempt was made to convince the animal that it was not in fact killed. Thus, in the hymn of the horse sacrifice in the *Ṛg Veda*, the priest says to the horse, “You do not really die through this, nor are you harmed. You go on paths pleasant to go on.” (RV 1.162.21).<sup>47</sup>

But these minor tremors, tiny faults in the Vedic ritual armor, eventually gave way to a major Hindu earthquake. Not only was the sacrifice of animals discontinued in upper caste Hindu temples; the entire mythology supporting that ritual was turned on its head. The Epics and Purāṇas contain Hindu myths in which the Vedic concept of the sacrificial victim as symbolic of the sacrificer, or of the god, or of both, was not ignored but, on the contrary, was taken so literally that it called the Vedic hand, as it were, and revealed the hidden deception inherent in the symbolic identifications. We will illustrate this assertion with two striking myths of this genre, the first very well known to Hindus throughout the ages as well as to Western scholars of Hinduism, and the second rather obscure in both Hindu and academic circles.<sup>48</sup>

The myth of the sacrifice of Dakṣa enacts a new fantasy, a new paradox of sacrifice:

Dakṣa had unwillingly given his daughter Satī in marriage to the god Śiva. One day, Dakṣa performed a sacrifice to which he invited all his daughters and sons-in-law and grandchildren, but he did not invite Śiva or Satī. When Śiva refused to attend the sacrifice, since he had not been invited, Satī insisted on going there without him. After she arrived, she rebuked the sages who were there, but Dakṣa continued to revile Śiva and to look upon Satī with hate. In anger and humiliation, Satī killed herself by burning her body in the fire of her own power of yoga.

When Śiva learned of this, he tore out a clump of his matted hair, from which a horrible demon was born. He instructed the demon to burn up the sacrifice of Dakṣa and all who were there. The demon and his demonic throng seized the sacrifice, which had taken the form of a wild animal to flee, and beheaded it. They mutilated the other gods, desecrated the goddesses, and polluted the sacrificial fire with excrement and filth. Then the demon found Dakṣa hiding in terror behind the altar; he dragged him out, tore off his head, and cast it into the fire into which oblations were placed.

The gods went to Śiva and praised him, begging him to restore Dakṣa and all the others, and promising to give him a share in the sacrifice. Śiva restored them all, giving Dakṣa the head of a goat, the sacrificial animal. Dakṣa arose and rejoiced. Though he had hated Śiva in the past, his mind was now clear. He praised Śiva, who gave Dakṣa permission to complete his sacrifice, in which a full share was given to Śiva. (ŚP 2.2.1-43; 4.12).

The “theoretical” identification of the sacrificer and the victim hypothesized by our theorists, and the all-too-demanding expectation, discussed in the Vedic ritual texts, that the sacrificer will offer himself, is literally realized and enacted in this myth. Because Dakṣa is both the victim and the sacrificer, when Śiva beheads Dakṣa he simultaneously ruins the sacrifice (by injuring the sacrificer) and accomplishes the sacrifice (by injuring the victim). Moreover, the oft postulated identity of the priest and the god is also actualized literally here: Śiva himself (or rather, his *surrogate*, the demon) performs the act of immolation. The “sacrifice of Dakṣa” is a theological pun (in English as in Sanskrit: *dakṣayaજ્ઞા*), a sacrifice that Dakṣa thinks is “by” Dakṣa, but that he comes to learn is “made of” Dakṣa when he substitutes for the sacrificial beast.

Some myths, such as the Brāhmaṇa myth of Śunaḥśepa (AitB 7.13-18) or the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, establish the paradigm of the sacrifice of an animal or a vegetable through the rejection of human sacrifice: a human is slated to be sacrificed as a surrogate for the animal victim (that is in itself a surrogate for the human sacrificer), and this sacrifice is at the last minute prevented. The myth of Dakṣa is a reversal of such a myth. Its narrative begins at a time when animal sacrifice had long been established, and then moves back to the primitive time (which might have never really existed at all) when human sacrifice had not yet come to be replaced by animal sacrifice; otherwise put, the myth moves behind the symbolic sacrifice of a goat to the actual sacrifice of the sacrificer.

The myth of Dakṣa demystifies the mystification of the Vedic sacrificial ritual; it lifts the curtain of liturgy to expose the trick trap doors and two-way mirrors of the enacted metaphor. What happens to Dakṣa is not what happens to the ordinary worshipper. For when the sacrificer identifies himself with the victim, as he does explicitly in this as in many if not all sacrifices, he does not mean that he is *really* the victim; after all, the victim gets killed, but he doesn’t. By

actually sacrificing Dakṣa, Śiva reminds him (and the hearer/reader of the myth) that the victim in the ritual is merely a surrogate for the sacrificer. Unlike the ordinary worshipper, Dakṣa gets caught up in the literal dramatization of the metaphor, or rather the collapse of the metaphor, in a ritual that entirely deconstructs its own symbolism: in Dakṣa's sacrifice, the victim does not "stand for" the sacrificer; he *is* the sacrificer.

By making the ritual literal rather than symbolic, the myth about the ritual totally inverts it; what happens here is what is always supposed to happen but never does happen, never should happen, and, one might say, never *can* happen in an actual sacrifice. Only at the end, when the goat's head is used in place of Dakṣa's head, does the myth reapproach what happens in an actual ritual. In this way, the myth of Dakṣa demythologizes the ritual by imaginatively realizing the symbolic identifications which are essential to the efficacy of the ritual operation only insofar as they remain symbolic.

There are other examples of this demystification of the sacrificial ritual in Indian mythology, other explorations of what happens when sacrificial ideology becomes real. In one of these, the myth collapses together not the victim and the sacrificer but the victim and the recipient of the sacrifice, the god. The chief queen in the ancient horse sacrifice pantomimed copulation with the slaughtered stallion, who was said to "be" both the sacrificing king (to whom he transferred his powers; ŚB 13.2.1.1) and the god Prajāpati (ŚB 13.1.1.1). In Hindu mythology, Indra, the king of the gods, is one of several gods designated as the recipients of the horse sacrifice, but he is unique in that he is himself a performer of horse sacrifices, famed for having performed more horse sacrifices than anyone else and jealous of this pre-eminence.<sup>49</sup> He thus (unlike the usual human worshipper) combines the roles of sacrificer and recipient. In one text, he adds to these roles that of the victim:

Janamejaya was consecrated for the sacrifice, and his queen, Vapuṣṭāmā, approached the designated stallion and lay down beside him, according to the rules of the ritual. But Indra saw the woman, whose limbs were flawless, and desired her. He himself entered the designated stallion and mingled with the queen. And when this transformation had taken place, Indra said to the priest in charge of the sacrifice, "This is not the horse you designated. Scram."

The priest, who understood the matter, told the king what Indra had done,



and the king cursed Indra, saying, "From today, Kṣatriyas [the class of kings and warriors] will no longer offer the horse sacrifice to this king of the gods, who is fickle and cannot control his senses." And he fired the priests and banished Vapuṣṭamā. But then Viśvāvasu, the king of the Gandharvas, calmed him down by explaining that Indra had wanted to obstruct the sacrifice because he was afraid that the king would surpass him with the merits obtained from it. To this end, Indra had seized upon an opportunity when he saw the designated horse, and had entered the horse. But the woman with whom he had made love in that way was actually Rambhā, a celestial nymph; Indra had used his special magic to make the king think that it was his wife, Vapuṣṭamā. The king of the Gandharvas persuaded the king that this was what had happened. (H 118.11-39).

Janamejaya is already familiar with shadow sacrifices, nightmare sacrifices; he had performed a surreal sacrifice of snakes, instead of horses, at the very beginning of the Mbh (1.47-53). Here at the very end of the Epic, his sacrifice goes wrong in yet another way: he implicitly defies the god simply by doing the extravagant sacrifice at all, which makes him the object of the god's envy, and then at the end he explicitly defies the god by excluding him from the sacrifice because the god has spoilt it by taking the form of the animal.

The story of Janamejaya, which *ends* with an exclusion of the deity and a refusal to worship him, is thus in many ways an inversion of the story of Dakṣa, which *begins* with the exclusion of the god Śiva and ends with the promise that Dakṣa will in fact sacrifice to Śiva, after Śiva has both ruined and accomplished the sacrifice by making the sacrificer take the form of the animal.

The epilogue of the Janamejaya story, in which the king is persuaded that it was all an illusion, is a common device used to undo what has been done in a myth, a kind of godhead *ex machina*. But it is also a recapitulation of precisely what the central episode of the myth has just done: it has revealed and unmasked the illusion implicit in the sacrifice, the illusion that the sacrificial horse is in fact the god Indra, and not merely a horse. Where the myth of Dakṣa reminds us that we would not like it if the sacrificer really *did* become the sacrificial animal, as the ritual texts say he does, the story of Janamejaya reminds us that we would not like it if the *god* really did become the sacrificial animal either, as the ritual texts also say he does.

These myths are hard-hitting exposés of substitution in sacrifice, demythologizing within the structure of mythical discourse the

ritual assumption that the sacrificial animal is a surrogate for the worshipper (Dakṣa) or the god (Indra). It may appear paradoxical that myths, which live in the realm of the imagination, should provide the tools to uncover the illusory nature of rituals, which actually happen. But of course it is *all* taking place in the imagination: the Hindu myths are not actually dealing with the Vedic ritual at all, but merely demystifying the Vedic *myths* about the Vedic ritual by *imagining* what ritual ideology would be like if realized, mythically. Here, as so often, the myth *tells the truth* about a painful paradox that other social forms—in this case, ritual—have had to keep in the dark. These myths move back behind the Vedic sacrifice to a mythical time in which the sacrificial animal was *really* something more than just an animal, and not just symbolically something more.

In addition to rethinking the nature of the Vedic animal sacrifice in myths, later Hinduism took further steps to come to terms with the ritual killing of animals. We have seen above that in the Vedic sacrifice vegetable oblations were the minimally acceptable lowest form of the sacrificial victim, the *paśu*. Under the influence of Buddhism or, more generally, of the doctrine of *ahimsā* that became a part of both Hinduism and Buddhism, a revisionary attitude toward the use of vegetable offerings came to the fore, one which continues to the present day. The carnivorous Vedic gods were generally replaced by strictly vegetarian Hindu deities who are said to accept no blood offerings, but only rice, fruits, flowers, and so forth. The vegetable offerings are obviously not animal victims; they are, however, often symbols of the now objectionable blood sacrifices of the Vedic past. The whole coconuts that the Hindu deity fancies bear a suspicious resemblance to human heads (an oft noted resemblance that is sometimes explicitly mentioned in the accompanying liturgy).

Within the Vedic sacrifice itself, as we have observed, the rice cakes were visualized as *paśus*, with chaff for hair, and so forth. When a Vedic sacrifice was recently performed in India under the auspices of Western scholars,<sup>50</sup> and objections were raised against the slaughter of goats, rice cakes alone were used. But the rice cakes were wrapped in leaves, tied to little leashes, and carefully “suffocated” before they were offered, a clear atavism from the Vedic

sacrifice in which, as we know, a living animal was suffocated. The replacement of animal with vegetable offerings, motivated here by non-Vedic considerations, obviates neither the need to represent the rice cakes as real animals nor the necessity to “kill” them in the sacrifice. The ambivalence toward the killing of an animal in Hinduism is another manifestation of the paradoxical conflict between the need to offer oneself to the god and the need to stay alive, which is a variant on the more basic paradox at the heart of all sacrifice: one must kill to live.<sup>51</sup>

While in Vedism substitutions for the prototypical victim (the sacrificer and/or the deity) were inserted on the basis of necessity, in Hinduism the substitute of a rice cake for a sacrificial animal is often couched in terms of morality, that is, in terms of non-injury or *ahimsā*. But there may also have been an element of necessity in the Hindu case just as in the Vedic. For the Hindus, vegetable sacrificial substitutes may have been necessitated by the challenge posed by the anti-Vedic polemic of Buddhism which had converted many powerful political leaders.<sup>52</sup> The heterodox traditions unveiled their new doctrines and religious activities in the guise of “higher” or “truer” forms of the Vedic ritual; the latter was in this way made to appear as relatively ineffectual in comparison with newly revealed, and entirely bloodless, “sacrifices.”<sup>53</sup> The orthodox Hindu traditions may have found it expedient, and also convenient, to adopt much the same strategy.

Texts such as the myths of Dakṣa and Janamejaya represent moments when a tradition says two different things at once: “We used to do that, but now we do this. We used to do sacrifice, but now we don’t anymore; we are therefore better than the old religion that we have evolved out of. On the other hand, what we do now is essentially the same as what we did; what we do now is really sacrifice still, but a better kind of sacrifice.” Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains all rejected the Vedic sacrifice, especially the animal sacrifice; but they also dressed up their new doctrines and religious activities in the guise of the Vedic sacrifice. The previous sacrificial tradition was in this way made to appear as relatively inferior to newly revealed “sacrifices.” But even anti-sacrificial traditions often found it necessary to call up the ancient category of sacrifice as a form of legitimation of the new in the guise of the old. New

doctrines and practices were lent the air of archaic authority by being encoded in the vocabulary of sacrifice. Sacrifice, then, may function to conceptualize and articulate the new in terms of the old. The category serves to *traditionalize innovations*.

The rice cakes do not, in fact, so much replace the offering of animal flesh as supersede it. That is, in the earliest records of the ancient Vedic horse sacrifice, the killing of the stallion was accompanied by an offering of balls of rice. The sacrifice was thus ambivalent from the very start; it involved not only an animal surrogate for human victim but also the substance that first complemented and ultimately came to replace that animal surrogate. Indeed, so intense is the symbolism linking the rice cake with the sacrificer that, already in the Vedic period, even the *symbol* could be repugnant: the Vedic texts state that one must not perform the twelve-day ceremony (involving the oblation of rice cakes) for another person, because by eating the victim, the cake, one would be eating the sacrificer's flesh (TS 7.2.10.4; KS 34.11).<sup>54</sup> The confusing complexity of such transformations was beautifully, if perhaps unconsciously, expressed by Evans-Pritchard, when he spoke of his intention to limit his discussion of sacrifice to blood sacrifice, but then remarked, "On the other hand, I include as coming within the sense of bloody sacrifice offerings of cucumbers, for they are consecrated and immolated as surrogates for oxen."<sup>55</sup>

### 5. Conclusion

We have seen how Vedic ritualism and the Hindu myths about the Vedic sacrifice explore the mysteries of sacrifice: the *mysterium fascinans et tremendum* of an act which is separated from profane, criminal acts of suicide and murder only by a convenient compromising of its own ideological principles. Sacrifice, we have observed, is an act which is always a shadow of itself. It is always an act of surrogation, an imitation of an ideal, a counterpart of an unrealizable prototype. Furthermore, it is an act whose own claims for itself, when taken literally and seriously, become the nightmares of mythology. Sacrifice, in sum, is paradoxically an act which becomes indistinguishable from suicide, murder, and deicide only when its ideology is realized; or, inversely put, sacrifice remains sacrifice only insofar as it substitutes for its own ideal form.

In one sense, then, sacrificial substitution is absolutely necessary for the integrity of the category “sacrifice.” It is substitution, in other words, that defines sacrifice as sacrifice. Substitution makes sacrifice possible: the surrogate victim that stands in for the sacrificer and the deity redeems the act from criminality. Sacrifice is thus an act which necessarily compromises its own principles through substitution. Further substitutions—substitutes for substitutes—are similarly compromises, and are treated as such in traditions like Vedism; that is, surrogates, necessary though they may be, are regarded as inferior to originals (which are unattainable or undesirable).

Substitutions in sacrifice may always be necessary; but, making the best of a bad situation, the substitute may also come to be valued higher than the original as substitution by necessity is recast as substitution by morality. The inversion of the worth of the vegetable oblation as one moves from Vedism to Hinduism—from the hierarchically inferior to the ethically superior—is one case in point of such a phenomenon.

The Hindu myths about the Vedic sacrifice argue with a paradoxical logic, looking back on their sources in a self-deceptive way. The tradition is driving with one foot on the brake and one foot on the accelerator; it is trying to find a way to have its rice cake and eat it too. It is saying, “It is a rice cake, and therefore a moral improvement on human or animal sacrifice, but it is also flesh, with all the power of the sacrifice that it came to replace; we are doing the same thing, but we are doing it differently.” And this phenomenon might be generalizable far beyond the Indian context, and far beyond the context of the fortunes of sacrifice in Indian history.<sup>56</sup>

Such revaluations, even reversals, of the old by the new, such a paradoxical relationship with the past (simultaneously conceived as the paradigmatic “good old days” where things were as they should be, and as morally inferior in light of “the new and improved” revelations of the present) suggest ways in which Eliade’s important thesis about *illud tempus* and the “prestige of origins” in religious thought can be extended and reconsidered. The relations that religious traditions maintain with their ancestors have far more complex implications than Eliade himself cared to

develop; they are permeated with ambiguities and ambivalence. *Homo religiosus* more often than not appears very akin to his more recent incarnation, the Freudian *homo psychologicus* whose ties to his individual *illud tempus*, the significant, even paradigmatic events of childhood, are similarly characterized by both obsessive fascination (the “eternal return”) and triumphant overcoming.

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, trans. W.D. Halls (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), p. 100. For a critical discussion of the interpretation of the Vedic sacrifice by Hubert and Mauss, see Arthur Bertridale Keith, “Communion and Sacrament in the Sacrifice,” pp. 268-278 of his *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925).

<sup>2</sup> Hubert and Mauss, *ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>3</sup> Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Ātmayajña: Self-Sacrifice,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6 (1941): 359.

<sup>4</sup> Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898), pp. 32-33.

<sup>5</sup> For the *sarvamedha*, consult K. Mylius, “Der Sarvamedha,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität (Leipzig)* 17 (1968): 275-77. For religious suicide in the Vedas, see S.A. Dange, “Religious Suicide in the Vedic Period?” *Indologica Taurinensia* 8 (1980): 113-121; and Jan Heesterman, “Self-sacrifice in Vedic Ritual,” pp. 91-106 of S. Shaked et al. (eds.), *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Heesterman, “Self-sacrifice in Vedic Ritual,” p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>9</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950), p. 145.

<sup>10</sup> Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Girard’s position is that there is both a concealment and a necessary memory of the original victim for the sacrifice to be efficacious: “Once we have focused attention on the sacrificial victim, the object originally singled out for violence fades from view. Sacrificial substitution implies a degree of misunderstanding. Its vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based. It must never lose sight entirely, however, of the original object, or cease to be aware of the act of transference from that object to the surrogate victim; without that awareness no substitution can take place and the sacrifice loses all efficacy.” *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

<sup>14</sup> For the 111 and 180 animal victims at the horse sacrifice, divided into village and jungle, see, for the first, TS 5.5.11-24; KS 5.7; MS 3.14.11ff; VS 24.30ff; and TB 3.9.1-4; for the second, TS 5.6.11-20; KS 5.9; MS 3.13.3ff; VS 24.2ff; and TB 3.8.19-3.9.1. For the details of performing the rite, consult ĀpŚS 20.14ff; BŚS 15.23; MSS 9.2.4.1ff; etc.

<sup>15</sup> Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> For a full translation and analysis of the myth of Śunaḥśepa, see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Hinduism*, in the series, Textual Sources for the Study of Religion, edited by John R. Hinnells (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 19-25.

<sup>18</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 229; *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 22; Edmund Leach, *Lévi-Strauss* (London: Fontana, Collins, 1970), p. 58 and p. 71.

<sup>19</sup> The astute reader may suspect a circular argument here, since several of the theorists that we have cited—notably Hubert and Mauss and Jan Heesterman—used the Vedic sacrifice for their primary data. But this cannot be said of Freud or René Girard, whose sacrificial paradigms were Greek, Jewish, and Christian. The Vedic material, in any case, has had theoretical importance far beyond its own context, as we too will argue.

<sup>20</sup> Or “Prajāpati is the sacrifice.” See, e.g., ŚB 3.2.2.4; 5.2.1.2,4; 5.4.5.21; 6.4.1.6; 14.1.2.18; TB 3.2.3.1; 3.7.2.1; etc. Cf. claims that Prajāpati emits from himself, or as one text says, “makes his *ātman*” the sacrifice (PB 7.2.1 and ŚB 4.2.5.3 where Prajāpati is also said to be the *ātman* of the sacrifice).

<sup>21</sup> ŚB 3.1.3.17; 3.1.4.5; 3.3.3.5; etc. In other instances, Prajāpati is identified with the year, and the year with the sacrifice (e.g., ŚB 5.2.1.2; 5.4.5.21; 11.1.1.1; cf. 11.2.7.1).

<sup>22</sup> Paul Mus, *Barabudur: Esquisse d'une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes* (Paris and Hanoi: Paul Geuthner, 1935), p. 121.

<sup>23</sup> The similarities between Vedism and Platonism have been noted by, among others, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy in his “Vedic Exemplarism,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1 (1936): 44-64; Hermann Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft: Die Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇa-text* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1919), esp. pp. 106ff.; and, more recently, Asko Parpola, “On the Symbol Concept of the Vedic Ritualists,” pp. 139-53 of *Religious Symbols and Their Functions*, ed. by H. Biezais (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1979). From the Greek point of view, see Anders Olerud, *Le macrocosmos et le microcosmos dans le Timée de Platon; étude de religion comparée* (Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells, 1951).

<sup>24</sup> Paul Mus, “La Stance de la plénitude,” *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 44 (1947-1950): 598.

<sup>25</sup> ŚB 5.1.3.8; 5.2.1.6. In an account of a sacrifice sponsored and performed by the gods, the list of *dakṣiṇās* or sacrificial fees given to the divine priests includes the gift of a man to Prajāpati (TB 2.2.5.3; cf. PB 1.8.14).

<sup>26</sup> “That same *puruṣa* became Prajāpati,” ŚB 6.1.1.5; cf. 6.1.1.8; 7.4.1.15; 11.1.6.2; TB 2.2.5.3; and JB 2.47. The phrase can also point to the identification between the creator god of RV 10.90 (Puruṣa, the Cosmic Man) and the cosmic progenitor of the Brāhmaṇas.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., AitB 2.11. Cf. ŚB 3.7.1.11 where the sacrificial stake (*yūpa*) to which the animal victim is tied is also connected, by the *nidāna*, to the sacrificer himself.

<sup>28</sup> Observe, for example, the progression in the list of substitutes for fire if, perchance, it has gone out and cannot be regenerated: one may, in that case, use an ordinary (*laukika*) fire, or offer in the right ear of a female goat (because, according to ŚB 7.5.2.6, Prajāpati created the goat from his ear?), in the right hand of the Brahmin (where the “oblations” of sacrificial gifts, *dakṣiṇās*, are also placed), on a cluster of *darbha* grass, or one may offer the oblation in water (ApŚS 9.3.3-16; BhŚS 9.4.5-9.5.5; HŚS 15.1.51-64; etc.).

<sup>29</sup> The “boy,” who plays no appreciable role in this version of the myth, is an echo of the important Ṛg Vedic myth in which the child of Agni is lost, searched for, and found (RV 5.2).

<sup>30</sup> That creation was often explained in Vedic texts as the result of the primordial sacrifice of Puruṣa or Prajāpati is well-known. See Brian K. Smith, “Sacrifice and Being: Prajāpati’s Cosmic Emission and Its Consequences,” *Numen* 32, 1 (1985): 71-87.

<sup>31</sup> The question of whether human beings were ever actually sacrificed in ancient India has long exercised scholars, and continues to do so. Bruce Lincoln, in his recent *Myth, Cosmos, and Society: Indo-European Themes of Creation and Destruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), opines that “In practice humans were probably never offered in India, the *puruṣamedha* (sacrifice of a man) remaining only a priest’s fantasy of the sacrifice to end all sacrifices” (p. 183). There is, however, in addition to the textual references to human sacrifice (see, e.g., VS 30.1-22; ŚB 13.6.1-2; and TB 3.4.1.1 ff), also physical evidence of its performance. For the archeological remains of human skulls and other human bones at the site of fire-altars, together with the bones of other animals, both wild and tame (horse, tortoise, pig, elephant, bovines, goats, and buffalos), see G.R. Sharma, *The Excavations at Kausambi (1957-1959)* (Allahabad: Institute of Archeology, Allahabad University, 1960), pp. 87 ff.; Dieter Schlinghoff, “Menschenopfer in Kausambi,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 11 (1969): 176-198; and the discussion of human sacrifice in Asko Parpola, “The Pre-Vedic Indian Background of the Srauta Rituals,” in Frits Staal’s *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), II:41-75, esp. 49-53. It is also possible that the ceremony known in the Vedas as the horse sacrifice originally involved the sacrifice of a man as well as a horse, for which consult James L. Sauv  , “The Divine Victim: Aspects of Human Sacrifice in Viking Scandinavia and Vedic India,” pp. 173-191 of Jaan Puhvel (ed.), *Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970); and Willibald Kirfel, “Der Aśvamedha und der Puruṣamedha,” in *Festschrift f  r Walther Schubring* (Hamburg: Walter de Gruyter, 1951), pp. 39-50.

<sup>32</sup> For other texts on “redemption” (*niṣkṛti*) in Vedic ritualism, see ŚB 11.1.8.1ff; 3.3.4.21; AitB 2.3; 2.9; KB 10.3; etc. See also G.U. Thite, *Sacrifice in the Br  hma  na-Texts* (Poona: University of Poona, 1975), pp. 144-45; 241-42; and L  vi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, pp. 130-38. Hubert and Mauss, as pointed out above, make this role of the victim that on which the communication between the sacred and profane turns: “The destructive consequences of the rite partly explain this strange procedure. If the religious forces are the very principle of the focus of life, they are themselves of such a nature that contact with them is a fearful thing for the ordinary man.... That is why between these powers and himself he interposes intermediaries, of whom the principal is the victim. If he involved himself in the rite to the very end, he would find death, not life. The victim takes his place. It alone penetrates into the perilous domain of sacrifice, it dies there, and indeed it



is there in order to die. The sacrificer [= sacrificer] remains protected: the gods take the victim instead of him. *The victim redeems him.*" *Sacrifice*, p. 98 (italics in the original).

<sup>33</sup> Centuries later, this identification of the "easiest" with the "best" became an argument in both devotional and Tantric Hinduism. But it would certainly be unwise to assert that the latter simplification, designed to appeal to all sorts of worshipper, can be derived from the hierarchical principles of the Vedic ritual reasoning. It is, rather, virtually an inversion of Vedic principles.

<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere one also reads of the synonymous "*kinnara*" and "*mayu*." Various translations have been offered for the *kimpuruṣa*, ranging from "monkey" or "dwarf" to "savage" or "mock-man," for which see Eggeling's note on ŚB 1.2.3.9. For the *kimpuruṣa* as a "horizontal androgyne," half equine and half human, in Hindu mythology, consult Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Woman, Androgynes and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 216 and 309. It seems probable, however, that in Vedic texts it is the tribal people or apes to which the terms *kinnara*, *kimpuruṣa*, and *mayu* refer.

<sup>35</sup> AitB 2.8; cf. MS 3.10.2 and ŚB 1.2.3.6-9. Compare also the similar stories of the relationship between the five sacrificial animals and five paradigmatic jungle animals at MS 2.7.17; KS 16.17; and TS 4.2.10.1-4; and yet another variant at AitB 3.33-34 where various wild animals are produced out of the ashes and charred remains of a completed sacrifice.

<sup>36</sup> See R. Gordon Wasson and Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968). The authors conclude that the Soma was originally a mountain mushroom called the fly agaric, which eventually became inaccessible to the ritualists as they moved away from the Himalayas. That an "original" Soma never existed at all is a speculation that has not been put forward by Indologists, and perhaps deserves consideration.

<sup>37</sup> S.C. Chakrabarti, *The Paribhāṣās in the Śrautasūtras* (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1980), p. 176. Cf. PMS 6.3.9, 35-36 and Śabara's commentary.

<sup>38</sup> Contrast this point to the definition of ritual proffered by Jonathan Z. Smith in his "The Bare Facts of Ritual," pp. 53-65 of *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982): "Ritual is a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritualized perfection is recollected in the ordinary, uncontrolled, course of things" (p. 63).

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., BŚS 29.8 for the "times of distress" which may preclude the performance of the Agnihotra: when there is a disturbance within the whole country, when one is afflicted with disease, when one is away on the journey, living at a teacher's house, when there are unfavorable conditions of place, time, and materials, or when there are "circumstances in which other things are unavailable."

<sup>40</sup> Claims of equivalency between sacrifices of clearly different hierarchical values, for example, are frequently made. We have already encountered ritual substitutes for the sacrifice of a thousand year duration, and in a real sense all Vedic sacrifices were substitutes for hypothetical and prototypical cosmic rituals. The phenomenon of "equivalency", when it deals with sacrifices within the realm of human possibility, most often takes the form of "equating" lesser rituals to the Soma sacrifice. See, e.g., ŚaḍB 4.1.6, 0-11; BhŚS 8.25.13; ŚB 11.7.2.2; 2.4.4.11-14; TS 1.6.9.1-2. For secondary studies on this feature of Vedic ritualism, see Brian K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion* (New York: Oxford

University Press, 1989); "The Unity of Ritual: The Place of Domestic Sacrifice in Vedic Ritualism," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 28 (1985): 79-96; G.U. Thite, *Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa-Texts*, pp. 49-50; and H.G. Bodewitz, *The Daily Evening and Morning Offering (Agnihotra) According to the Brāhmaṇas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 125-35. For claims of equivalency between various rites of the *upanayana* or initiation and the subsequent period of Veda study, on the one hand, and the *śrauta* rituals on the other, see Brian K. Smith, "Ritual, Knowledge, and Being: Initiation and Veda Study in Ancient India," *Numen* 33, 1 (1986), esp. pp. 79-80.

<sup>41</sup> For the performance of lesser *śrauta* rituals in the course of the performance of the Soma sacrifice, see Jan Gonda, *The Havīryajñāḥ Somāḥ: The Interrelations of the Vedic solemn sacrifices. Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra 14, 1-13. Translation and Notes* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1982). For a general statement about this "embedding" of smaller rituals within larger ones in Vedic ritualism, consult Frits Staal, "Ritual Syntax," pp. 119-42 in *Sanskrit and Indian Studies*, ed. by M. Nagatomi et al. (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979).

<sup>42</sup> We have treated this topic more extensively in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Other Peoples' Myths* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1988), Chapter Three; and Brian K. Smith, "Exorcising the Transcendent: Strategies for Defining Hinduism and Religion," *History of Religions* 27:1 (August, 1987): 32-55.

<sup>43</sup> For the recitation of the Veda as a sacrifice, see Charles Malamoud, *Le Svādhyāya: Recitation personnelle du Veda* (Paris: Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1977). A parallel phenomenon may be seen in the way in which, in Judaism, the recital of the portions of the Bible dealing with sacrifice came to be regarded as "the only generally recognized substitutes for the sacrifices offered up in the Temple." See M. Gaster, "Sacrifice (Jewish)," pp. 24-29 of volume 11 of James Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh, 1908-1926).

<sup>44</sup> A more extensive discussion of this point may be found in Brian K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion*, Chapter Eight.

<sup>45</sup> Two great myths of this genre are the story of Rudra hunting the incestuous father, Prajāpati (AitB 3.33-34), and the story of Pṛthu hunting the non-nourishing mother, the Earth-cow (AV 8.10.22-29; BhP 4.13-19). For a treatment of the relationship between hunting and sacrificial killing see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Other Peoples' Myths*, Chapter Four. Cf. the recent discussion on the same topic—largely stimulated by the work of Walter Burkert—in *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation*, ed. by Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

<sup>46</sup> ŚB 11.6.1.1-13; JB 1.42-44. The story is translated in full and analysed in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Tales of Sex and Violence: Folklore, Sacrifice, and Danger in the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), pp. 32-39.

<sup>47</sup> These kinds of rationalizations of the killing of the victim are a nearly universal trait of sacrificial traditions all over the world. For other examples, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Bare Facts of Ritual."

<sup>48</sup> See also Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Other Peoples' Myths*, Chapter Five.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, the many Epic and Puranic variants of the story of Indra's theft of the sacrificial horse of King Sagara, e.g., Mbh 3.104-108; R 1.38-44; VP 4.4.1-33; etc.

<sup>50</sup> Described at length in Frits Staal (ed.), *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*.

<sup>51</sup> This conundrum of life—and of sacrifice—has been the centerpiece of Jan Heesterman's work on the "cyclical" or "preclassical" pattern of the Vedic

sacrifice. See the important essays collected in *The Inner Conflict of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>52</sup> The Buddhists, too, may have had moral reasons to abolish the sacrifice (as they said they did); but they may also have wanted to make a clean break with Vedism by appropriating, in a transformed version, the definitive element of Vedic self-definition—sacrifice (not unlike the Jewish self-definition by circumcision, another form of transformed sacrifice).

<sup>53</sup> See the Buddhist narrative on the “true sacrifice” (always characterized by *ahimsā*) in the Kūṭadanta Sūtra, included in T.W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 3 vols., Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vols. 2, 3, and 4 (London: Pali Text Society, 1899; reprint ed., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973-77), 1:160-85. For a similar story from the Jaina tradition, see the tale of Harikeśa, found in H. Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, 2 vols., Sacred Books of the East, Vols. 22 and 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884-85; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1968), 2:50-56.

<sup>54</sup> Cited by Eggeling in his translations of ŚB 1.2.3.5, in favor of the argument that the rice cake replaced an original human sacrificial victim.

<sup>55</sup> E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 197.

<sup>56</sup> One obvious place to begin such a comparison would be with the transition from the actual sacrifice of a scapegoat and a Passover lamb in ancient Judaism to the historical sacrifice of Jesus interpreted as a substitution for that lamb; and, subsequently, the ritual sacrifice of a wafer and a cup of wine as a substitute for the actual crucifixion of Jesus. See Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *Other Peoples’ Myths*, Chapter Five.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

AitB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
ĀpŚS	Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra
ĀśvŚS	Āśvalāyana Śraute Sūtra
AV	Atharva Veda Saṃhitā
BhP	Bhāgavata Purāṇa
BŚS	Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra
BhŚS	Bhāradvāja Śrauta Sūtra
H	Harivaṃśa
HŚS	Hiraṇyakeśin Śrauta Sūtra
JB	Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa
KB	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa
KS	Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā
KŚS	Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Mbh	Mahābhārata
MS	Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā
MŚS	Mānava Śrauta Sūtra
PB	Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
PMS	Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtra of Jaimini
R	Rāmayaṇa
RV	R̥g Veda Saṃhitā
ṢaḍB	Ṣaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
ŚŚS	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra

ŚB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
ŚP	Śiva Purāṇa
TB	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TS	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
VP	Viṣṇu Purāṇa
VS	Vājasaneyā Saṃhitā

## SHARED REALITIES AND SYMBOLIC FORMS IN KASHMIR ŚAIVISM

GAVIN D. FLOOD

### *Introduction*

The expression ‘Kashmir Śaivism’ has come to refer to the various traditions of non-dualistic Śaivism which developed in Kashmir between the 9th and 11th centuries C.E.<sup>1</sup> By ‘non-dualistic’ or ‘monistic’ I mean the Tantric Śaiva traditions which revered a scriptural authority other than the orthodox Vedas, namely the Tantras and Āgamas, and which propounded a doctrine that ultimately there is only one dynamic reality of which the manifold forms of the universe are dreamlike projections. I specifically refer to three traditions—or lineages of teachers (*santāna*, *paramparā*) and textual commentary—the Trika (‘Threefold’),<sup>2</sup> Spanda (‘Vibration’) and Pratyabhijñā (‘Recognition’). The Trika, which regards itself as a revealed religion, is primarily a system of initiation and liturgy (specifically the two liturgical systems of the *tantra* and *kula prakriyā*-s), the Spanda a tradition of yoga and textual commentary and the Pratyabhijñā the theological articulation of monistic Śaiva metaphysics. Although these are distinct, with their own lines of transmission and specific terminologies, they can nevertheless be regarded as part of the same tradition expounding the same ‘truth’, finding their synthesis in the works of the renowned Trika theologian Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025 C.E.) and his student Kṣemarāja (c. 1000-1050 C.E.).<sup>3</sup> Since I shall be mainly referring to the works of these two authors, I shall use the term ‘Trika’ to refer to this syncretic monistic tradition.

This paper is concerned with the relation between Trika Śaiva soteriology and cosmology or the way in which, while keeping beings bound in the cycle of birth and death, the structure of the cosmos also allows for their liberation. I want to show here that liberation conceived by the Trika Śaiva as the eradication of the pollution of individuality (*āṇavamala*), which is also immersion

(*samāveśa*) into the highest reality of Paramaśiva, is thought to be achieved through the assimilation of higher levels of the universe. These higher levels, which might be called 'shared realities' or 'collective bodies', are expressed in symbolic forms. Thus the concept of a shared reality or collective body is of crucial importance in Trika soteriology. This assimilation of higher levels, which is also an assimilation of the Trika Śaiva into those levels, erodes and finally eradicates individuality and social identity which, says the Trika, deludes us and entraps us in the cycle of birth and death. That is, higher cosmical levels which constitute a system of shared or collective realities, are expressed through the symbolic forms of the Trika religion such as the *guru*, *mantra* and initiation and are regarded as transformative because the mind is thought to take on the qualities of what it apprehends. Thus for the Trika renunciation is the renunciation of the impurity of individuality.

#### *The Shared Realities of the Trika Cosmos*

In the Trika world-view the cosmos, called the body of the universe (*viśvaśarīra*<sup>4</sup>) and body of play (*krīḍaśarīra*<sup>5</sup>), comprises many worlds of experience which I shall call 'shared realities' or 'collective bodies' in so far as the layers within the cosmos, within the body of the universe, are regarded as bodies.<sup>6</sup> These worlds of experience are shared in the sense that they are created by the operation of the consciousness of beings within them, which itself is karmically determined. Furthermore these shared realities are not located in an absolute unchangeable space, but are rather to be seen as multiple worlds that rise and fall, like waves on the ocean of Paramaśiva's consciousness or flames from fire to use the metaphors of the *Vijñānabhairava*,<sup>7</sup> a text of Śaiva yoga. These shared realities, created by consciousness, can overlap. For example the *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* (MVT), the main scriptural authority of the Trika, among its 118 worlds (*bhuvana*-s) in the universe includes the worlds of insects (*sarpajāti*), plants (*sthāvara*), birds (*pakṣijāti*), wild (*mṛga*) and domestic (*paśva*) animals and the human world (*manuṣabhuvana*).<sup>8</sup> Each of these is a reality shared by the beings within it, yet these worlds also overlap in the sense that they can interact with each other. Thus the plant, insect and human worlds all exist within the wider sphere of the earth (*prthivītattva*).

There are of course according to the Trika Śaivas many other shared realities whose interaction with the human world is hidden. For example, the worlds of the divine beings the Gandharvas, the Yakṣas and the demonic Piśācas just above the human world according to the MVT.<sup>9</sup> A hierarchy of shared realities or worlds of experience is thus manifested, in the terminology of the later Trika, from supreme consciousness. This supreme consciousness, also called the body of consciousness (*viññānadeha*<sup>10</sup>, *cidvapus*<sup>11</sup>, *cidrūpa*<sup>12</sup>) or body of light (*prakāśavapus*<sup>13</sup>, *prakāśaśarīra*<sup>14</sup>), manifests the body of the universe in varying degrees of subtlety to the most solidified or coagulated.<sup>15</sup>

This idea of a shared reality or collective body is expressed by a number of terms such as *aṇḍa*, *tattva*, *kula*, and *viśaya*. These terms have a range of designations, some quite specific within the context of the cosmical hierarchy such as *aṇḍa* and *tattva* and others less so such as *kula* and *viśaya*, but all imply this idea of a shared reality or collective body. More specifically *aṇḍa* ('egg') denotes a broad sphere of the cosmos—the cosmos is arranged in a fourfold hierarchy of these—each of which contains further layers or *tattva*-s,<sup>16</sup> while *kula* ('family') and *viśaya* ('range') denote a shared reality within or between *aṇḍa*-s. I shall here examine the terms *tattva* and *viśaya* in order to demonstrate this idea and to show how this concept is crucial to Trika soteriology in that higher shared realities are expressed at lower levels as symbolic forms which are transformative.

The term *tattva* in Śaivism can function in a general ontological sense of reality as the absolute Paramaśiva, who is called the supreme reality (*paratattva*),<sup>17</sup> but the term is also used in a cosmological sense, referring to the thirty six *tattva*-s which constitute the Śaiva universe, namely the twenty five Sāṃkhya categories plus eleven Śaiva ones (see fig. 1). The ontological and cosmological designations are of course related, though the cosmological is always ultimately reducible to the monistic ontology of the Trika tradition.

This *tattva* cosmology functions in both a liturgical context, in the identification of the body with the cosmos,<sup>18</sup> and as an explanation of the cosmos and human location within it. More specifically *tattva* seems to have three principal meanings according to

Transcendent Paramaśiva, the body of consciousness.

ANḌA	TATTVA	ŚAKTI	EXPERIENT
	(1) <i>Śiva</i> (2) <i>Śakti</i>	<i>Cit</i> <i>Ānanda</i>	<i>Śiva</i>
Śakti (ruled by Īśvara)	(3) <i>Sadāśiva</i> (4) <i>Īśvara</i> (5) <i>Śuddhavidyā</i>	<i>icchā</i> <i>Jñāna</i> <i>Kriyā</i>	<i>Mantramaheśvara</i> <i>Mantreśvara</i> <i>Mantra</i>
Māyā (ruled by Rudra)	(6) <i>Māyā</i> ( <i>mala-s</i> of <i>āṇava</i> , <i>māyīya</i> , <i>kārma</i> )  (7) <i>kalā</i> (8) <i>vidyā</i> (9) <i>rāga</i> (10) <i>kāla</i> (11) <i>niyati</i> } (12) <i>puruṣa</i>		<i>Vijñānakala</i> <i>Pralayakala</i>          <i>Sakala</i>
Prakṛti (ruled by Viṣṇu)	(13) <i>prakṛti</i>  (14) <i>buddhi</i> (15) <i>ahamkāra</i> (16) <i>manas</i>  (17)-(21) <i>jñānendriya-s</i> (ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose) (22)-(26) <i>karmendriya-s</i> (speech, hands, feet, anus, reproductive organs) (27)-(31) <i>tanmātra-s</i> (sound, touch, form, taste, smell) (32)-(35) <i>bhūta-s</i> (space, air, fire, water,)		
Prṥhivī (ruled by Brahmā)	(36) earth		

Fig. 1. Śaiva cosmology according to the *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* (2.36-58) and Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra*.



Abhinavagupta, namely: (i) a constituent of a level of reality, or the substance of the worlds in the cosmos; (ii) a principle governing a level of the cosmos which is also a deity; and (iii) a category of perception. These meanings are interrelated, as I hope to show.

(i) In the *Īśvaraṇṇābhijñānāvimarśinī* (IPV) Abhinavagupta equates *tattva* with substance (*vastu*) and object of cognition (*prameya*),<sup>19</sup> thereby indicating that *tattva* is that which constitutes a level of the cosmos or world(s). However this equation of *tattva* with substance must be seen in a relative context, for ultimately of course there is no substance distinct from pure consciousness; a contentious issue between the Śaiva dualists and non-dualists.<sup>20</sup> Indeed Abhinavagupta argues in the IPV that the objects of limited, bound consciousness, which we might call limited worlds, exist independently of that limited consciousness, but not independently of the light (*prakāśa*) of pure consciousness. He argues this on the grounds that subjects and objects become differentiated at a certain level of the cosmos below the *māyātattva* (and so objects appear to be distinct from subjects), yet these objects—and indeed the subjects—must inhere within the pure consciousness of Śiva, otherwise how could these objects of perception be illumined?<sup>21</sup> *Tattva* therefore refers to the appearances (*ābhāsa*-s) of manifestation which are levels of the cosmos and also to the objects or worlds of experience (*bhuvana*-s).

(ii) The second meaning of *tattva* is of a governing principle underlying or controlling a level of the cosmos or group of worlds. The various layers of the cosmos are patterned according to certain principles which are more restrictive in the lower echelons than in the higher. For example the five *tattva*-s of particularity of authorship (*kalā*), limited cognition (*vidyā*), passion (*rāga*), time (*kāla*), and causal restriction (*niyati*) are principles which constrain consciousness into the particularity of the individual experient, the *puruṣa* or *aṇu*. Another example from the cosmos above *māyā* is the *tattva* of Sadāśiva which is the first unambiguously manifested level of the cosmos, distinct from the pure *Śivatattva*, containing the seeds of subject-object differentiation. According to Kṣemarāja this *Sadāśivatattva* is both a world of experience in which consciousness is aware of its identity with incipient objectivity (*asphuṭedantā*) and a principle constraining that world in the sense that the higher

beings at that level, not subject to rebirth, called Mantramahēśvaras, are governed (*adhiṣṭhita*) by Sadāśiva.<sup>22</sup> The Mantramahēśvaras are, as it were, within the sphere of Sadāśiva. Thus the Sadāśiva *tattva* both refers to a level of reality or world of experience and to a governing principle which is also a deity presiding over that level. This is corroborated by Abhinavagupta who makes a distinction (*vibhakta*) between the *Sadāśivatattva* and the deity Sadāśiva presiding over it.<sup>23</sup>

These two concepts of *tattva* as a constituent of a level of reality and a controlling principle which is also a deity with a certain range of influence, are therefore related in that the constituent of a world (*bhuvana*) is also the power which sustains and indeed causes it. The relation between *tattva* and world of experience (*bhuvana*) is that the latter is both caused by and is a property of a *tattva*, as—to use a Śaiva metaphor—sweetness is both caused by and is a property of sugar cane juice. Indeed this is also applicable on a larger cosmic scale; manifestation being both caused by and a property of pure consciousness.

(iii) Thirdly *tattva* is equated by Abhinavagupta with a category of perception (*padārtha*), such as the categories of space (*dīś*), substance (*dravya*), action (*kriyā*), relation (*sambandha*) and the universal (*sāmānya*) which are to be grasped (*grāhya*) or understood through mental discrimination (*mānasavikalpa*).<sup>24</sup> This shows that the term *tattva* designates worlds distinct from particular subjects and also the means of perceiving those worlds. *Tattva* is therefore a constraint on pure consciousness which results in the multiplicity of forms on a cosmic scale, yet also constrains particular perception and so functions to bind beings into the cycle of rebirth. Conversely because *tattva* is a category of perception, it can function to transform perception in so far as the discrimination of *tattva*-s is a rising up through the levels of the cosmos, which is a change of perceptual categories.<sup>25</sup> For example, the *Sadāśivatattva* is a layer of the cosmos but might also be seen as a category of perception in so far as the yogin at that level perceives the cosmos as Sadāśiva, such a transformation being facilitated by symbolic forms, as we shall see.

I have shown that *tattva* is both a level and a deity with a certain sphere or range of perception and control, which is the *tattva* that

he governs. This range or sphere of perception is also referred to as *viśaya*. I wish now to develop this idea further in order to show how symbolic forms are expressions at a lower level of the cosmos of higher levels and how these are transformative. The term *viśaya* is often rendered 'object' or 'sense object' and though this is a correct designation I would argue that the term in the context of Śaiva cosmology has a wider connotation in that it implies not only sense-object but also sphere or range of perception and body. Indeed this variability of meaning is dependant upon which level of the cosmos it refers to. From an absolute perspective *viśaya* refers to the entire universe as the object or body of pure consciousness, from the perspective of a higher deity it refers to his/her sphere of influence or power, while for the bound experient or particularized consciousness it refers to his/her limited perceptual field.

It is clear that *viśaya* refers to the limited perceptual field of the bound experient whose attention is, says Kṣemarāja, constantly 'going out' (*bahirgatiḥ*) or 'facing out' towards its sphere of perception, its *viśaya* (*viśayonmukhatā*).<sup>26</sup> Or again he says that limited consciousness (*citta*) is characterized by *viśayavāsanā*, a tendency towards its external sphere.<sup>27</sup> Here *viśaya* refers to the range or possibilities of perception which the limited experient's attention is constantly flowing out towards. Indeed liberation consists in stopping this outward flowing movement which can be done, says Kṣemarāja quoting a text called the *Kramasūtra*, through devouring the fetters of the fields of perception (*viśayapāśān bhakṣayet*) as fire consumes fuel,<sup>28</sup> which means through the practice (*abhyāsa*) of yoga or withdrawing the mind from the external world and developing what Kṣemarāja calls the central channel (*madhyamanāḍī*) through which power (*śakti*) unfolds.<sup>29</sup>

However, *viśaya* has a wider meaning than this and refers to the universe as a whole, called the body of the universe (*viśvaśarīra*) or body of play (*krīḍaśarīra*). Thus Kṣemarāja refers to the mass of perceptual fields (*viśayagrāma*) as objectivity (*idantā*) and the external face (*bahirmukha*) which he contrasts with the complete I-ness (*pūrṇāhantā*) or essence (*svarūpa*) of Paramaśiva.<sup>30</sup> Here we see that *viśaya* refers to the totality of the manifest universe which is thus the sphere of Paramaśiva's perception or indeed his body.

Furthermore *viśaya* also refers to the shared realities within this

cosmic body which indeed comprise it. They are spheres of influence and perception of a deity or controlling principle as well as that deity's body. A good example of this is found in the 'Hymn to the Circle of Deities Situated in the Body' (*Dehasthadevatācakraṣṭotra*) attributed to Abhinavagupta. This hymn presents the cosmos, contained within the individual body, as an eight petalled lotus upon whose petals are the eight mothers (*mātṛkā*-s), goddesses whose origins can be located in the ecstatic cremation ground traditions of visionary yoga.<sup>31</sup> Each one is identified with a certain level of the cosmical hierarchy and they surround Śiva and Śakti as Ānandabhairava and Ānandabhairavī in the calyx, which thus represents the essence of the cosmos. The goddesses in this hymn offer the shared realities, the *viśaya*-s, over which they preside to Ānandabhairava in the centre. The use of the term *viśaya* here has the double implication of both sphere of perception and body, thus the hymn says that the goddesses are perpetually offering Bhairava the pleasures (*bhoga*) of their own spheres or bodies.<sup>32</sup> For example, Brahmāṇī whose *viśaya* is the *buddhitattva* which is characterized by certainty (*niścaya*) offers Bhairava flowers of certainty or Indrāṇī whose body (and here the text uses the term *tanu*) is sight (*dr̥ś*) offers flowers of form. These eight mothers in offering Bhairava their *viśaya*-s are in a sense offering him the totality of the shared realities which comprise the cosmos. Thus it might be said that the body of the universe offers itself to the body of consciousness with which it is ultimately identical and, moreover, all this occurs within the individual body.

Another example illustrating this meaning of *viśaya* as a shared reality which is a deity's sphere of perception and body, is found in the Mantras, beings who exist in the 'pure' realm or course (*śuddhādhvan*) of the cosmos above the *māyātattva*. Their *viśaya* is of bound beings beneath them. That is, lower beings in lower shared realities according to Abhinavagupta are located within the *viśaya* of the Mantras.<sup>33</sup> This has soteriological significance in that the function of the Mantras is to withdraw beings within their *viśaya* back to the pure consciousness of Śiva. Their *viśaya* is therefore equated with their sphere of power (*adhikāra*) which is ultimately derived from pure consciousness. Bound beings can enter into this power, enter the *viśaya* of a Mantra, through initiation by a Trika

*guru*. Indeed the Mantras are implicitly regarded as Śiva's organs or faculties (*karana-s*)<sup>34</sup> and the dualist text the *Mṛgendrāgama*, sometimes quoted by Trika authors,<sup>35</sup> makes explicit this connection between Śiva's organs and the higher beings of the 'pure' realm as instruments of his grace.<sup>36</sup>

The fulfilling of Paramaśiva's will and the dispensation of his grace towards embodied ones (*dehinah*) is their only purpose. According to the *Spanda Kārikā* and Kṣemarāja's commentary the *Spandanirṇaya*, once that is done, once freed from their authority (*adhikāra*)—called a pollution (*adhikāramala*)<sup>37</sup>—their bodies which are aerial (*ākāśīya*), comprising manifold sound (*vicitravācaka*) and differentiated awareness (*paramarśa*) are tranquilised (*śānta*) and they merge (*sampralīyante*) with Śiva along with the mind of their devotees (*ārādhakacitta*).<sup>38</sup> We see here firstly that the Mantras existing above the *māyātattva* have bodies of awareness and sound which can also be identified with cosmological levels or worlds of sound, and secondly that they have a *viśaya*, another body as it were, which descends below the *māyātattva* to embrace various bound beings within it. These bound beings are within the *viśaya* of a Mantra and are liberated through entering this *viśaya*, which has a soteriological function. How then can a bound experient enter into such a *viśaya*? The answer to this lies in the concept of symbolic form.

### *The Symbolic Forms of the Cosmos*

Shared realities which are both higher levels of the cosmos and deities are expressed in symbolic forms. By symbolic form I mean a structure disclosed at one level of the cosmos which is a projection of and participates in a higher reality. Certain forms expressed at one level embody or reflect the qualities of a higher level from which they are derived and reveal an order of meaning which reflects the order of the cosmos. In one sense all forms for the Trika are symbolic in so far as they are a consequence of and share in the omnipresent reality of the body of consciousness, but all symbolic forms are not equally transformative.

The Trika concept of symbol has, I would argue, its nearest semantic equivalent in the expression 'symbolic form'. My use of

Cassirer's term 'symbolic form' is not disconnected with his, in so far as for him (i) symbolic forms are grounded in the activity of consciousness, (ii) they lead to a determinate order of meaning, (iii) what can be known depends upon the symbols consciousness creates, and (iv) any perceptive act is 'symbolically pregnant', by which he means interwoven with or related to a 'total meaning'.<sup>39</sup> In other words, and the Trika authors would agree, consciousness is transformable through symbolic forms which reveal a determinate order of meaning. Where the Trika authors would differ from Cassirer is in what that determinate order of meaning is and in that symbolic forms open levels of reality which would otherwise be closed. In other words levels of meaning for the Trika are also levels of reality.

A symbolic form is therefore an expression at one level which discloses a higher level, revealing a structure of reality not immediately apparent. For the Trika, higher realities by which I mean the collective bodies of the universe reveal themselves in symbolic forms and are therefore channels of communication between and within collective bodies. For example, according to Abhinavagupta the term *līṅga*—which can designate 'symbol' in the sense of an outer emblem displayed by a yogin<sup>40</sup> and the particular 'phallic' symbol of Śiva—has a manifest and unmanifest or hidden meaning. The symbol is a hierarchical structure whose outer form points to and is derived from its higher, and ultimately its supreme, form and is thus a channel between layers of the cosmos. Indeed Abhinavagupta classifies the term 'symbol' (*līṅga*) into the categories of unmanifested (*avyakta*), manifest-unmanifested (*vyaktāvyakta*) and manifested (*vyakta*). These form a hierarchical sequence of meaning. The unmanifested symbol (*avyaktalīṅga*) is equated with the 'supreme heart of tranquility' (*viśrāntihṛdayaṃ paraṃ*) which Jayaratha furthermore equates with other synonyms for the absolute such as awareness of subjectivity (*aham̐parāmarśa*), the vibration of consciousness (*saṃvitspanda*) and so on<sup>41</sup>. This is the real meaning of *līṅga* for Abhinavagupta leading to true perception (*sākṣāt*), to which the manifested or external symbol points and of which it is an expression. Indeed this unmanifested symbol is defined by Abhinavagupta as that into which 'this universe is dissolved (*līṇam*) and which is to be understood as abiding here

within (*antaḥstham*)'.<sup>42</sup> The manifest-unmanifest symbol is equated with the individual body pervaded by the cosmos (*adhvan*) while the manifested symbol is 'a form of vibration which is particularized' (*viśeṣaśpandarūpaṃ*),<sup>43</sup> that is, an outer form (*bahīrūpa*). Thus the unmanifested symbol corresponds to the supreme body of consciousness, the manifested-unmanifest symbol to the totality of shared realities or collective bodies which make up the universe and are within the individual body, while the manifested symbol corresponds to particular forms external to the individual body.

Like other Tantric traditions the Trika claims divine origin from Paramaśiva whose revelation is contained in the holy texts (*Āgama*) and doctrinal systems (*saṃpradāya*) and whose power is transmitted through the line of teachers, the *santāna* or *paraṃparā*. The symbolic forms of the Trika which are expressions of and derived from these higher realities are thought to give access to those levels. In this way the tradition claims to provide guidance and context for the individual cut-off from higher realities. These symbolic forms can be classified as direct or indirect according to the degree of transformation which they aim to provide. Direct symbolic forms give access to the pure consciousness of Paramaśiva and are therefore of greatest soteriological value, while indirect symbolic forms give access only to higher shared realities. This is an important distinction in the Trika for only some symbolic forms give access to the transcendent. For example, the initiation (*dīkṣā*) which gives access to Paramaśiva, the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*, is of a higher order than the initiation giving access only to the texts and liturgies of the tradition, the *saṃyadīkṣā*. This initiatory distinction can again be seen in the hierarchy of initiations, with the Trika at the top and other traditions arranged below this at different cosmic levels. For example, the Buddhists at the level of the *buddhitattva*, the Vedānta at the level of *Īśvaratattva* and so on.<sup>44</sup>

Arguably the central symbolic form, by which I mean the most transformative, is the *guru* and other symbolic forms of *mantra* and initiation take on meaning only in relation to this figure who imbues them with power. The Trika offers access to ultimate reality through the symbolic forms of its *guru*-s who are thought to be both channels of the power of Paramaśiva and conveyors of a teaching. These two ideas of the *guru* as the conveyor of power and a formal

teaching are not necessarily embodied in one figure, though both roles might be combined in any one individual or lineage. This distinction between the *guru* as the transmitter of either power or a formal teaching seems to correspond to Abhinavagupta's distinction between *maṭhikā* and *jñāna guru*-s, the former representing a preceptorial line conveying power and a teaching, the latter representing teachers of other disciplines.<sup>45</sup> Indeed this is indicated by his reference to a Dharmasīva who taught an 'indirect initiation' (*parokṣadīkṣā*), i.e. an initiation which did not give direct access to Paramasīva.<sup>46</sup>

Within the *maṭhikā* category are included two *guru* traditions of importance, called the *Traiyaṃbakamaṭhikā* and the *Ardhatraiyaṃbakamaṭhikā*. These two lineages are associated with the two liturgical systems within the Trika known as the *tantraprakriyā*, the normative practice of the Trika Śaiva,<sup>47</sup> and with the esoteric *kulaṃprakriyā*, the 'family practice', which involved love-making as part of its liturgy.<sup>48</sup> Abhinavagupta was initiated into both lineages, the *Traiyaṃbaka guru*-s including the line of teachers Somānanda, Utpaladeva and Lakṣmaṇanagupta which provided the theological articulation of the Trika in the Pratyabhijñā or Recognition school of interpretation.<sup>49</sup> Among the *guru* lineage of the *Ardhatraiyaṃbaka* Abhinavagupta includes a certain Śaṃbhunātha. This *guru* seems to have been Abhinavagupta's inspiration in writing the *Tantrāloka* and was evidently a powerful figure, being described as the sun who has removed the darkness of ignorance from Abhinava's heart<sup>50</sup> and as the moon on the ocean of Trika doctrines.<sup>51</sup> Through him Abhinavagupta was initiated into the secret *kulaṃprakriyā* or more specifically through Śaṃbhunātha's consort Bhagavatī who was a 'messenger' (*dūtī*) in the secret rite.

What this shows is that the *guru* is both/either a conveyor of power and/or a conveyor of teachings. Three possibilities therefore emerge. Firstly a tradition in which the teachers convey only a normative, formal teaching or doctrine, Abhinavagupta's *jñānaguru*-s, which might include orthodox Vedic teachers and the orthodoxly aligned Śaiva Siddhānta. Secondly a *guru* lineage which conveys both a teaching and endows spiritual power, mainline Tantric tradition such as the *Traiyaṃbakamaṭhikā*. Thirdly a *guru* tradition of power only, such as the *Ardhatraiyaṃbakamaṭhikā*, indicating a 'hard'



or perhaps 'left-hand' Tantric tradition. Indeed a characteristic of power lineages is that their teachings are secret, which might mean not simply that they're not telling, but rather that they cannot be told in any formal presentation of doctrine; power being immediate and non-discursive.

These lines of transmission (*santāna*, *paramparā*) are traditionally traced back to a divine source. The *guru paramaparā* can therefore be viewed as a current of energy issuing from Paramaśiva, or perhaps indirectly through the Mantras, and manifested in the particular forms of the *guru*-s. In Śaiva traditions the transmission of these lineages is sometimes thought to pass from Śiva to his Śakti and then to a group of intermediate *ṛṣi*-s who pass it onto human *guru*-s. For example in the MVT the transmission issues from Śiva's mouth (Aghora) to Pareśa and thence to Devī, from her to Kumāra who transmits the doctrine to Brahmā's four sons and thence to the *ṛṣi*-s Nārada, Agatsya and so on. From there the transmission enters the human world.<sup>52</sup> Or again Abhinavagupta gives the lineage of the Kula tradition which he traces back to four mythical figures Khagendra, Kūrma, Meṣa and Maccanda (= Matsyendra).<sup>53</sup>

The *paramparā* or *santāna* is therefore an extension or expression of the deity's power and is thus in many ways similar to the concept of *viśaya* as a sphere of power or range of influence. Indeed the *paramparā* might be regarded as an extension in the human realm of a deity's *viśaya*: the Mantras, beings in pure manifestation, dispense the grace of Paramaśiva to those beings within their *viśaya* through the *guru* lineage.<sup>54</sup> A *guru* tradition is thus regarded as the expression of a deity's sphere or even directly of Paramaśiva's sphere. The *guru* lineage is an expression of a higher shared reality and the individual *guru* in such a lineage is a direct symbolic form of both that higher level from where his power stems and of the tradition of previous *guru*-s. He is the result of and embodies the tradition; the teaching *guru* being an indirect symbolic form of a higher reality through his teachings, the power *guru* being a direct symbolic form embodying the power of a higher level of the cosmos. The power *guru* is linked both synchronically with his source of power, say Śiva, and diachronically with that power through the *paramparā*. Being so connected with a higher reality the power-*guru*

is a means of transformation for his disciples—i.e. those whom he has initiated—for through him they have contact with that divine source.

A power-*guru* who is at one with the body of consciousness can bestow grace and indeed might present a formal teaching as well. Such a one is the true (*sat*) *guru*. The DH says that the *sadguru* who is without pollution (*amalam*), reveals (*bhāti*) the universe as a path of Śiva (*śivapatham*).<sup>55</sup> Such a *guru* is transformative, indeed the *Śiva Sūtra* says that ‘the *guru* is the means’ (*gururupāyaḥ*),<sup>56</sup> that is, the means of liberation, of gaining access to the body of consciousness. In his commentary on this passage Kṣemarāja refers to the *guru* as the ‘power of supremely majestic grace’ (*pārameśvarī anugrāhikā śaktiḥ*). He quotes the MVT which says that the ‘wheel of power’ (*śakticakra*) is (also) called the mouth of the *guru*’ and another text, the *Mantraśirobhairava*, says that the ‘power coming from the mouth of the *guru* is greater than the *guru* himself’.<sup>57</sup>

These passages are good examples of the *guru* as a direct symbolic form. Here the *guru* is a channel for *śakti* and not just a teacher. The wheel of power, which refers to the totality of the cosmos, is revealed through the *guru*’s mouth. This power which is the *guru* greater than the *guru*, a power higher than the physical manifestation, is also cosmic sound. The *guru*’s speech or word can also mean his subtle or mantric speech which flows through him. Indeed *mantra* given by the *guru* to the disciple—through the *guru*’s mouth—during initiation is, according to Kṣemarāja, no mere combination of manifested letters (*vicitravarṇa*), but is rather the means whereby the consciousness of the devotee obtains the sameness of flavour (*sāmarasya*) with the deity of the *mantra*.<sup>58</sup> This idea that the *guru*’s speech or word is his subtle or mantric speech is again suggested by Kṣemarāja who writes ‘due to the grace (*prasannāt*) of the *guru* (there arises) the realization of the wheel of the mothers (*mātrkācakrasambodhaḥ*)’.<sup>59</sup> The *guru* reveals the wheel of the mothers which is the cosmos as a circle of sound, each of the goddesses corresponding to certain levels of cosmic sound which comprise the cosmical hierarchy.<sup>60</sup>

As a direct symbolic form the power *guru* has access to all these cosmical levels and being beyond the *māyātattva* can bestow grace and liberate beings from *saṃsāra*. The MVT says that:

He who understands the meaning of all these *tattva*-s, illuminating the energy of *mantra*, he is called the *guru*, equal to me (Śiva). Men who are touched, spoken to and seen by him with a delighted mind (*prīṭacetasā*) are released from sins even in seven lifetimes.<sup>61</sup>

Here we see the *guru* as a direct symbolic form with power over lower shared realities, who can destroy karma through a glance or touch, the source of his glance being beyond the *kārmamala* which is manifested at the level of *māyā*. Thus Kṣemarāja quotes a text which says that the *guru* who reveals the *mantra aham* should be worshipped as Bhairava, because for him everything appears as *mantra*.<sup>62</sup>

From these passages we can see that the Trika Śaivas had a high regard for the *sadguru* as the embodiment of sound and power, regarding him as the symbolic form of Paramaśiva with limited extension at the level of the individual body, but being infinite at the level of the body of consciousness. Sound (*mātrkā, nāda*) is that power which flows through the *guru* and is identical with grace. Indeed the power *guru* exists entirely for the dispensation of grace: grace, sound and power are united in the form of the *guru* who, says the *Netra Tantra*, knows the *tattva*-s, knows the way (*adhvavid*) and is a universal giver.<sup>63</sup>

To recap for a moment. I have tried to show that the Trika Śaiva cosmos comprises a hierarchy of levels which are worlds of experience or shared realities controlled or constrained by deities which are also underlying principles. This idea can be seen in the terms *tattva* and *viśaya*. Furthermore these shared realities have a soteriological function in so far as higher shared realities are expressed in the lower through the symbolic form of the *guru* and also in *mantra* and initiation (*dīkṣā*). I shall now discuss the way in which the symbolic form of the *guru* is thought to be transformative or salvific.

### *Transformation Through Symbolic Forms*

As I have said, the Trika in all its phases regarded itself as a system of liberation or transformation through initiation which intends towards its theologically defined goal. In the third phase of the Trika's development this is expressed in terms of immersion (*samāveśa*) into Paramaśiva or pure consciousness.<sup>64</sup> I do not intend

to discuss here the various methods which are thought to bring this liberation about,<sup>65</sup> but rather the principles underlying the process. That is, I intend to show the relation between the presupposition of liberation and the idea of symbolic forms.

Liberation for the Trika means the eradication of individuality (*ānava*), regarded as a pollution (*mala*) which becomes manifest at the level of *māyātattva*, and the recognition of one's identity with pure consciousness which is also immersion into Paramaśiva. Although becoming manifest at the *māyātattva* level, the pollution of individuality exists above there as a latent tendency (*vāsanā*) within the pure course or realm.<sup>66</sup> Indeed the very notion of manifestation entails the idea of impurity and some differentiation in contrast to the undifferentiated consciousness of Paramaśiva. Kṣemarāja speaks of two stages of liberation, expressed in the *Svacchanda Tantra* as firstly self realization (*ātmayyāpti*) at the level of the immanent (*viśvamaṇya*) *śivatattva* (equated with the sound level of *unmanā*) and secondly Śiva realization (*śivavyāpti*), which is transcendent (*viśvot-tīrṇa*) and beyond all *tattva*-s (equated with the sound level of *samanā*).<sup>67</sup> The former is characterized by a state of solitude (*kaivalya*) endowed with the powers of cognition (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*), the latter is the unknown supreme reality (*aviditvā paraṃ tattvaṃ*), which has abandoned the constraint of all the cosmic ways (*sarvādhvopādhivarjitā*).<sup>68</sup> We see here that the initial liberation has not wholly eradicated the pollution of individuality; there is still some sense of distinction as is indicated by the very term 'self' (*ātman*) or 'soul' (*jīva*). Only when all trace of individuality, all constraints (*upādhi*-s) are eradicated or transcended, is there a final liberation.

This eradication of individuality is achieved through the assimilation of symbolic forms. By this I mean the Trika Śaiva's internalization of these forms which is his transformation to the shared reality behind them. Symbolic forms are transformative for two reasons, firstly, as I have discussed, they are expressions of higher levels and secondly because of the principle common to all yoga that the mind takes on the qualities of what it contemplates. Through focussing on a symbolic form, such as a *mantra*, the mind takes on the qualities of that form and is elevated to the level where the *mantra* truly reverberates.<sup>69</sup> Internalization of the *mantra* is

transformation to its higher reality and the subsequent erosion of the idea of a distinct, particular identity.

Abhinavagupta illustrates this principle that the mind takes on the qualities of what it perceives by citing the case of a *mantra* for protection from snake bites which translates as 'this poison cannot kill me, I am indeed Garuḍa' (*naitat viṣaṃ mām mārāyati garuḍa eva aham*). Abhinavagupta says that this works because there is conformity (*ānukūlya*) of awareness (*vimarśa*) to what is experienced (*bhājate*).<sup>70</sup> In other words awareness conforms to the object of contemplation, so if one has realized the level of the deity Garuḍa, the devourer of snakes, then consciousness takes on the qualities of that level and therefore has control over snake bites because control over snakes.<sup>71</sup> This principle applied to the context of liberation means that through contemplating a *mantra* empowered by a *guru* who is a direct symbolic form of Paramaśiva, the mind will take on its qualities and the limiting qualities of bound consciousness will be eroded and finally, at the stage of *śivavyāpti*, eradicated. The qualities of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience will then be realized. This principle also works in reverse in the sense that the mind takes on the qualities of lower forms and so is entrapped by them.

So liberation, which is the eradication of individuality, occurs due to the principle that the mind takes on the qualities of what it contemplates. But not only this, liberation is also through the power of the *guru*. The *guru* as a direct symbolic form has the power to bestow liberation. Indeed Kṣemarāja says that the *guru* is in a condition (*samāpatti*) in which he can unite the particular consciousness of the disciple with Śiva.<sup>72</sup> The Trika accept the idea that this can be instantaneous, in which case the disciple is said to vacate his body immediately and die (the *sadyonirvāṇadīkṣā*).<sup>73</sup> But less extreme, through initiation the *guru* allows the disciple the possibility of immersion into pure consciousness while alive.

Brunner-Lachaux has shown that there are essentially two kinds of Śaiva initiation, the *samaya* and *nirvāṇa dīkṣā*-s.<sup>74</sup> The former is initiation into the family of Śiva, allowing entry into the texts, *mantra*-s and practices of the cult, but without the eradication of *karma*, while the latter is initiation into liberation, which eradicates accumulated karmic residues (*sañcitakarma*) embedded within the

subtle body, though not the karmic residues which are to come to fruition in the present lifetime (*prārabdhakarma*).<sup>75</sup> One who has undergone the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*, called a son of Śiva (*putraka*), is on his way to liberation in his lifetime (*jīvanmukti*). Indeed Abhinavagupta says that the ladder (*sopāna*) to liberation only begins with the eradication of the impurity of karma (*kārmamala*),<sup>76</sup> which is a cosmical force arranging the relation between experients, bodies and worlds of experience; a force which, says Abhinavagupta, is responsible for the chain of bodies, faculties and perceptual fields (*tanukaraṇaviśayasambandha*) from the present to the future.<sup>77</sup> Initiation allows for the shift of consciousness from a limited field of perception, a limited karmically determined *viśaya*, to a less limited one beyond the operation of karma; that is, to the *viśaya* of a Mantra expressed in the *guru*, which finally becomes at liberation the unlimited *viśaya* of Paramaśiva.

Initiation given by the Trika power guru allows for the eventual eradication of individuality, partially determined by karma, which dictates an experient's particular body and shared reality. Indeed this eradication of individuality is indicated, as Sanderson has excellently shown, in the initiations into the Tāntrika and Kaula liturgical systems, during which there occurs varying degrees of possession (*āveśa*) by the goddesses of the *maṇḍala*.<sup>78</sup> This possession can be seen to be a precursor of the final 'possession' (*samāveśa*) by Paramaśiva which eradicates all trace of the impurity of individuality (*āṇavamala*). In the terminology I have suggested here, the limited shared reality of the bound experient is eradicated through the sudden intrusion of higher shared realities, represented by the goddesses, which in turn are finally eradicated by the assimilation of the ultimate shared reality of Paramaśiva.

To conclude. I have shown firstly that for the Trika Śaiva the cosmos comprises a hierarchy of shared realities expressed by the terms *tattva* and *viśaya* and secondly that these shared realities are manifested in the symbolic forms of the tradition, particularly the symbolic form of the *guru* which reveals the determinate order of meaning and reality in the universe. Symbolic forms thus have soteriological consequence for the eradication of individuality which is the Trika Śaiva's aim; firstly because symbolic forms are expressions of and channels for communication with higher levels

and secondly because the mind takes on the qualities of what it apprehends, so contemplation of higher symbolic forms leads to transformation to those levels. Renunciation for the Trika Śaiva is therefore renunciation of individuality and orthodox social identity which is undermined by the eradication of caste in Trika initiation.<sup>79</sup> The Trika renouncer, far from asserting his individuality, as Dumont claims of the orthodox renouncer,<sup>80</sup> intends to eradicate it by conscious effort through the assimilation of higher powers and his identification with the universally shared reality of Parmaśiva's pure consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that non-dualistic Śaivism developed beyond the boundaries of Kashmir, particularly in South India as Maheśvarānanda's *Mahārthamañjarī* attests. There was also a flourishing dualistic Śaiva tradition within Kashmir, theologically articulated in the Śaiva Siddhānta, which was supplanted by monism. Cf. Dyczkowski, M., *The Doctrine of Vibration*, New York (1987) pp. 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> So called because of the 'triads' which pervade it, primarily the three Trika goddesses Parā Parāparā and Aparā. See Sanderson, A., 'Maṇḍala and the Agamic Identity of the Trika of Kashmir' in Padoux, A. (ed.), *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituels dans l'Hindouisme*, Paris (1986), for an account of these.

<sup>3</sup> Sanderson (1986) pp. 180-204 has shown that three phases of the Trika can be discerned, the first phase represented by the root scriptural authority of the tradition, the *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra*, the *Tantrasadbhāva Tantra* and the *Siddhayogīśvarīmata*; the second phase by the *Trikahṛdaya* and the *Trikasadbhāva*; and the third phase by the works of Abhinavagupta, particularly the *Tantrāloka*.

<sup>4</sup> PH p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> SN p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'body' can be applied to these higher regions of the cosmos in the sense that each region, while being a self-contained homeostatic system, nevertheless reflects and reiterates the 'body of the universe (*viśvaśarīra*)'. Thus Abhinavagupta (TA 6.36) divides the hierarchical cosmos—expressed here in the Śaiva model of the six-fold way (*ṣaḍadhvan*)—into three levels called the supreme (*para*), subtle (*sūkṣma*) and gross (*sthūla*) body (*vaṇus*). Cf. the *Lakṣmī Tantra* of the Pañcarātra, a text displaying much monistic Śaiva influence, which says that a region of the cosmos (*kośa*) is a synonym for 'nest' (*kuḷāya*) which is another name for 'body' (*śarīra*) (6.5b).

<sup>7</sup> VB 110.

<sup>8</sup> MVT 5.5.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 5.4.

<sup>10</sup> SKvṛtti p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> PH p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> SN 1.3 p. 14 & 1.8 p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> PH p. 8; SN p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> IPV 1.5.3 p. 207.

<sup>15</sup> PH p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> MVT 2.49; PS 4 & 5. These *aṇḍa*-s correspond to the *kalā*-s of the six-fold way (*ṣaḍadhvan*) and the *kośa*-s of the *Lakṣmī Tantra*, ch. 6. See Padoux, A., *Recherches sur la Symbolique et l'Énergie de la Parole dans certains Textes Tantriques*, Paris (1963), for an excellent account of Śaiva cosmology as the manifestation of sound.

<sup>17</sup> SN p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> See Brunner-Lachaux, H. SP (3 vols.) for an account of this process. In Śaiva and other Tantric daily and occasional liturgies the *tattva*-s are identified with the body and ritually dissolved thereby 'destroying' and 'purifying' the body (the *bhūtaśuddhi* rite). A 'divine body' (*divyadeha*) is then created through the imposition of *mantra*-s upon the body (*nyāsa*) and the person is thereby identified with the deity: to worship Śiva one must become Śiva (SN p. 50). Cf. the Pañcarātra text the *Jayākhyasamhitā* (Baroda, 1931) chs. 10 to 13.

<sup>19</sup> IPV 2.3.13 p. 128.

<sup>20</sup> TA 1.239-40.

<sup>21</sup> IPV 2.5.1. Cf. Alper, H., 'Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness: The Spaciousness of the Artful Yogi', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 7 (1979) pp. 345-407.

<sup>22</sup> PH verse 3 and comm.

<sup>23</sup> IPV 3.1.3 & 4 pp. 222 & 226.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>25</sup> SS 3.3 & comm. This sūtra defines *māyā* as the non-discrimination (*aviveka*) of the *tattva*-s.

<sup>26</sup> SSV p. 131.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> PH p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, verse 17 and comm.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> By 'cremation ground (*śmaśāna*) tradition' I specifically refer to the traditions of the Kāpālīka, Krama and Kula (which merges into the Śrīkula and Kālīkula of later Tantra—see Goudriaan, T. and Gupta, S., *Hindu Tantric and Śākta Literature*, Wiesbaden (1981) pp. 9, 58ff.) which greatly influenced the Trika and in which that tradition is rooted. Traditions of cremation ground asceticism are very ancient and can be traced at least as far back as early Buddhism (cf. *Theragata* v. 136 p. 123 (Rhys David's translation)).

<sup>32</sup> DH v. 3: 'I praise Ānandabhairava, made of consciousness. The goddesses of the sense faculties constantly worship him in the lotus of the heart with the pleasures of their own perceptual fields/bodies.'  
*ātmiyaviśayabhogair indriyadevyaḥ sadā hṛdam bhoje / abhipūjayanti yaṁ taṁ cinmayam ānandabhairavaṁ vande.*

<sup>33</sup> IPV 3.2.7 p. 252.

<sup>34</sup> SN p. 46 says that both Mantras and faculties (*karana*-s) arise from the absolute.

<sup>35</sup> Eg. TA 9.190; 6.144, 165. See Sanderson (1986) p. 263.

<sup>36</sup> MG 4.1 & 2 and *vṛtti*.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 4.3-4.

<sup>38</sup> SK 2.1-2 and *nirṇaya*.

<sup>39</sup> Cassirer, E., *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, New Haven (1957) pp. 200ff. Here Cassirer cites the example of a line which firstly shows itself to consciousness and expresses a particular mood in its up and down or jerky movements, which



mood is not a projection of consciousness but determined by the line itself. Secondly we can see the line as a mathematical structure, then as a mythical symbol marking the division between the sacred and the profane and finally as an object of aesthetic contemplation. This line as a symbolic form is 'symbolically pregnant'. My use of 'symbolic form' is akin to Rawlinson's use of 'symbol', who distinguishes between sign and symbol thus: 'A sign gains its meaning from a context at the same level; its meaning is conventional or agreed—i.e. it has no inherent meaning. A symbol gains its meaning from a context at a higher level; its meaning is given or revealed—i.e. it has inherent meaning.' (Rawlinson, A. 'Visions and Symbols in the Mahāyāna' in Connolly, p. (ed.), *Perspectives on Indian Religion*, Delhi (1986) p. 203). This use is also akin to Eliade's (see his 'Methodological Remarks on the Study of Symbolism' in Eliade, M. and Kitagawa, J. M. (eds.), *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, Chicago (1966, 1st ed. 1959).

<sup>40</sup> Kṣemarāja quotes a text (SSV p. 112), the *Śrīkulapañcāśikayām* which says that higher beings (the *marīcaya*-s) do not approach yogins displaying outer signs, but only those with unmanifested symbols: 'The particles of light (*marīcaya*) speak (only) having seen those with unmanifested symbol. They who are very mysterious (*atigupta*) do not approach those with (manifested) symbols.'

*avyaktaliṅginam dṛṣṭvā sambhāsante marīcayaḥ / liṅginam nopasarpanti atiguptatārā yataḥ.*

<sup>41</sup> TA 5.112b-113 and Jayaratha's comm.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, 5.113: ... *viśvam idaṃ līnam atrāntaḥsthaṃ ca gamyate.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, 5.117a.

<sup>44</sup> PH sūtra 8 and comm. Other texts have different *dīkṣā*-hierarchies. For example the SVT 11.68b-74 has the Vedas at the level of *pradhāna*, Sāṃkhya at the *puruṣatattva*, the Lākuliśa Pāśupatas at *māyā*, the Buddhists at the *buddhitattva*. Cf. SP vol. 3 9.7-8.

<sup>45</sup> See Rastogi, N., *Introduction to the Tantrāloka*, Delhi (1987) pp. 34-55 for an account of this distinction and of Abhinavagupta's teachers.

<sup>46</sup> TA 21.50, ref. cited by Rastogi (1987) p. 37.

<sup>47</sup> See Sanderson (1986) for an account of this.

<sup>48</sup> TA 29.114-117.

<sup>49</sup> SD 7.106-122. The *Traiyaṃbakamaṭhikā* begins on Mount Kailāsa with Śrīkaṇṭha, a form of Śiva, who transmitted the secret teachings (*śāstram rahasyam*) and power of the monistic vision to Durvāsas (7.110) who created a mind-born son (*sasarja mānasam pūtram*) Traiyambaka (7.111), then being transmitted to human gurus of which Somānanda is the inheritor (7.120-121). See Pandey, K.C., *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, Benares (1959, 1st ed. 1935) pp. 135ff.

<sup>50</sup> TA 1.21, ref. cited by Rastogi (1987) p. 45.

<sup>51</sup> TA 29.95.

<sup>52</sup> MVT 1.2-4, 14.

<sup>53</sup> TA 29.29-32. Cf. Goudriaan and Gupta (1981) p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> SK 1.2 and *nirṇaya*.

<sup>55</sup> DH v. 4.

<sup>56</sup> SS 2.6.

<sup>57</sup> SSV p. 60: *gurorgurutarā śaktirguruvaktragatā bhavet.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>60</sup> SS 2.7 and *vimarśinī*.

<sup>61</sup> MVT 2.10-11: *yaḥ puṇaḥ sarvatattvāni cettyetāni yathārthaḥ / sa gurur matsamaḥ prokto mantravīryaprakāśakaḥ // spṛṣṭāḥ sambhāṣitās tena dṛṣṭāś ca prīta cetasā / narāḥ pāpāḥ pramucyante saptajanmakṛtair api //.*

- <sup>62</sup> SSV p. 67.
- <sup>63</sup> NT 16.40, ref. cited by Brunner, H., 'Un Tantra du Nord: le Netra Tantra', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, 61, (1974) pp. 125-196, p. 162.
- <sup>64</sup> Eg. TS p. 8f.
- <sup>65</sup> See TS p. 6f. for an account of the four *upāya*-s. Also Dyczkowski (1987) ch. 7.
- <sup>66</sup> Cf. TS p. 29f. on the imploding of consciousness into itself in the form of the twelve Kālīs, even the *vāsanā* of individual existence being devoured.
- <sup>67</sup> SVT 4.387-397. See also Kṣemarāja's commentary on SS 3.7.
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 4.391 p. 246.
- <sup>69</sup> SSV p. 47: 'the identity (*sāmarasya*) (with *mantra*) is obtained by supreme awareness of the deity of *mantra*'.
- ... *mantradevatāvīmarśāparatvena prāpta tat sāmarasyam* ...
- <sup>70</sup> IPV 2.3.1-2 p. 86.
- <sup>71</sup> Cf. TA 10.144: 'Whatever the (state of) consciousness, so the experience both manifested and unmanifested.' *yathā yathā hi saṃvittiḥ sa hi bhogaḥ sphuṭo'sphuṭaḥ*. Ref. from Dyczkowski (1987) p. 53. Woodroffe expresses this point well: 'By worship and meditation or *japa* and *mantra* the mind is actually shaped into the form of the object of worship and is made pure for the time being through the purity of the object ... which is its content.' (Woodroffe, J., *The Garland of Letters*, Pondicherry (1979, 7th ed., p. 15). Cf. Gonda, J., 'The Indian Mantra', *Oriens*, 16 (1963), pp. 244-297: 'realization of a *mantra* (occurrence of the *mantracaitanya*) is the union of the consciousness of the *sādhaka* with that consciousness which manifests in the form of *mantra*.' (p. 276).
- <sup>72</sup> SN p. 52f.
- <sup>73</sup> See Brunner, 'Le Sādhaka, personnage oublié de l'Inde du Sud', *Journal Asiatique* (1975) pp. 411-443, p. 417.
- <sup>74</sup> See Brunner-Lachaux's SP vol. 3 1.17b-21.
- <sup>75</sup> TA 9.230 and Jayaratha's comm.; See Brunner (1975) p. 417; SP vol. 3 p. xxivf.
- <sup>76</sup> IPV 3.2.10 p. 255.
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup> Sanderson (1986) p. 169. He refers to TA 15.448-456b and 29.207-208.
- <sup>79</sup> Sanderson, 'Purity and Power Among the Brahmans of Kashmir' in Carithers, M., Collins, S. and Lukes, S. (eds.), *The Category of the Person*, Cambridge (1985) p. 198ff.
- <sup>80</sup> Dumont, L., 'World Renunciation and Indian Religion', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 4 (1960) pp. 33-62.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND TEXTS

(References in the notes are to the Sanskrit editions of the texts, usually the KSTS, unless otherwise indicated.)

DH *Dehasthadevatācakraśtotra* attributed to Abhinavagupta (the information concerning doubt about Abhinava's authorship of this text was conveyed to me by Alexis Sanderson), in Pandey (1935). Ed. with French translation by L. Silburn, *Hymnes de Abhinavagupta*, E. de Boccard. Paris, 1970.

- IP *Īśvarapratyabhijñāṅkārikā* of Utpaladeva, M. S. Kaul (ed.) KSTS no. 34, 1921 (includes Utpala's *vṛtti*).
- IPV *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī* of Abhinavagupta vol. 1 KSTS no. 22, 1918 (ed. M. R. Śāstri). Vol. 2 KSTS no. 33 (ed. M. S. Kaul). Text and English translation by, K. C. Pandey in *Bhāskari* (3 vols.), Banares, 1954. Reprinted *Doctrine of Divine Recognition*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1986.
- KSTS Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies.
- MG *Mṛgendrāgama* French translation of *Jñāna* and *Yogapadas* of MG by M. Hulin, *Mṛgendrāgama Sections de la Doctrine et du Yoga, avec la vṛtti de Bhaṭṭanārayaṇakantha et la dīpikā d'Aghoraśivācārya*. Institut Française d'Indologie, Pondichery, 1980.
- MVT *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* ed. M. S. Kaul, KSTS 37, 1922.
- NT *Netra Tantra* with *uddiyota* by Kṣemarāja, 2 vols. ed. M. S. Kaul, KSTS 46 & 61, 1926 and 1929.
- PH *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* of Kṣemarāja, ed. J. C. Chatterji, KSTS 3, 1911. English translation Jaideva Singh, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1963.
- PS *Paramārthasāra* of Abhinavagupta with *viṛti* by Yogarāja, ed. J. C. Chatterji, KSTS 7, 1916. French translation L. Silburn, Paris 1957.
- SD *Śivadr̥ṣṭi* of Somānanda, ed. with Hindi translation by Radheshyam Chaturvedi, Varanasi 1986.
- SK *Spanda Kārikā* of Vasugupta or Kallaṭa with the *vṛtti* of Kallaṭa, ed. J. C. Chatterji, KSTS 5, 1916.
- SKvṛtii *Spandakārikāvṛtti* of Kallaṭa (see SK)
- SN *Spandanirṇaya* of Kṣemarāja, ed. with English translation by M. S. Kaul, KSTS 42, 1925. English translation by Jaideva Singh, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1980.
- SP *Somaśambhupaddhati* ed. with a French translation by H. Brunner-Lachaux, 3 vols., Pondichery, 1963, 1968, 1977.
- SS *Śiva Sūtras* of Vasugupta (see SSV).
- SSV *Śivasūtravimarśinī* of Kṣemarāja, ed. J. C. Chatterji, KSTS 1, 1911. French translation L. Silburn, Paris 1980. English translation Jaideva Singh, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979.
- SVT *Svacchandabhairavatantra* with *uddiyota* of Kṣemarāja, ed. M. S. Kaul, 7 vols., 1921-55. Reprinted in 4 vols., Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1986.
- TA *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta (see TAV).
- TAV *Tantrālokaṇṭikā* of Jayaratha, eds., M. R. Śāstri and M. S. Kaul, 12 vols., KSTS 1818-1938. Reprinted eds. R. C. Dwiwedi and N. Rastogi, 8 vols., Delhi, 1987. Italian translation by R. Gnoll, *La Luce delle Sacre Scritture*, Boringheri, Torino, 1972.
- TS *Tantrasāra* of Abhinavagupta ed. M. S. Kaul, KSTS 17, 1918; ed. M. M. R. Sastri, Delhi 1982. Italian translation by R. Gnoli *L'Essenza dei Tantra*, Torino, 1960.
- VB *Vijñānabhairava* with commentaries of Kṣemarāja and Śivopādhyāya, ed. M. R. Śāstri, KSTS 8, 1918. French translation L. Silburn, Paris, 1961. English translation Jaideva Singh, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979.

## SACRAMENTAL ASPECTS OF THERAVĀDA BUDDHIST MEDITATION

WINSTON L. KING

This is written with full appreciation of the difficulties intrinsic to making cross-cultural comparisons and applying the categories of one religious tradition to another. For here there is no such thing as a totally “objective, scientific” method of dealing with cultural entities. The very attempt to be “scientific and objective” betokens both a personal set of values and a culture-bound perspective, that is, a particular personal-cultural set of lenses through which one does the viewing. Indeed even a translation from another language into one’s own, particularly that of a non-cognate language, is in reality an interpretation. And every attempt to “understand” another culture and religion, even to portray it penetratingly and sympathetically, is somewhat distorted by the difference endemic to the situation.

Nevertheless such difficulties must be faced and dealt with as well as we are able—unless we are satisfied to remain in cultural solipsism. For all inter-cultural scholarship, to say nothing of the international necessities of every sort, compels us to undertake the impossible, strictly speaking; and in doing so we cannot avoid viewing our subject matter through *some* set of perspectival lenses—there is no escape from this. Indeed we can understand what any other person, in any culture, including our own, is saying or doing, only by means of our own personal, or personal-cultural, perspectives—or else shut up housekeeping as a human being.

This is all by way of introducing the following subject-matter: The application of a very specifically, percularly Christian category, sacrament, to a very different religious entity—Theravāda Buddhist meditation. There is scarcely any need of a reminder how very different these religious traditions are: Christianity is theistic, full of the language of sin and redeeming grace; Theravāda Buddhism is radically non-theistic, full of the language of salvation gained by enlightening introspective knowledge of the

self—or the lack of self—to be gained by self-effort. The basic question then is: Can the term “sacramental” have any meaning whatsoever when applied to Theravāda Buddhist meditation?

The contention here is that it can. Sacramental may be initially defined as having the character of “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace”, to use a classic definition. And in classical Christianity the ordained sacraments were considered to be the only valid or “appointed means of receiving salvific grace.”<sup>1</sup> The quintessential, though not only, form of the Christian sacraments is the eucharist by which the divine is tangibly and directly mediated to the human, the supernatural embodied in the natural.

Most of the Theravāda structure of religious belief and practice will be bypassed here in order to concentrate on what may be called the quintessence of orthodox Theravāda Buddhism, around which the rest of Buddhism is gathered as around its sacred heart and core, that which makes Buddhism Buddhist, namely its central discipline of salvation. This is the meditational technique. For no matter how far off anyone who considers him or herself a Theravāda Buddhist, in any sense of the word, may be from the hope of the attainment of final Nibbāna—or even in no special hurry to reach it as one of my Burmese friends declared himself to be—everyone knows that the unavoidable strait and narrow road leading to salvation is the meditational discipline. Sooner or later in one’s repeated embodiments it must be embraced if rebirth is to be escaped.

That being the case we here consider the proposed application of the term “sacramental” to this meditative discipline. Of course it can scarcely be called a sacrament in a narrow ritualistic sense. There is no highly ritualized ceremony performed by an authorized priest, for example, though as we shall see there *is* the functional near-equivalent of a priest. Nor is meditation a once-for-always action such as baptism, confirmation, or extreme unction; nor is it exactly a repeated act such as the eucharist but rather an ongoing process. Hence I use the term “sacramental aspects” rather than the full-bodied “sacrament.”

We turn now to our main thesis. In what *sense* then can Theravāda meditation be said to have “sacramental aspects?” The

“sacramental” may be said to have four characteristics, wherever sacraments or their functional equivalents in non-Christian faiths are to be found—and all are to be found in Theravāda meditation.<sup>2</sup> First there must be a tangible outward set of actions relating directly to the inward and spiritual aspect. In Theravāda meditation this aspect is not as tightly and rigidly structured, or quite as visibly present as in a Christian sacrament, but its equivalent is there. Thus there is a specified procedural apparatus, to be found in the mechanics of the meditative technique, such as the proper posture (sitting in the lotus position, with hands properly positioned in the lap, back straight, abdomen relaxed), attention fixed on a chosen subject or object, and controlled breathing. Indeed in the classic Theravādin pattern there is a wealth of precise detail of procedure spelled out in the manuals—see for instance Buddhaghosa’s *The Path of Purification*. And analogously to the officiating priest, there is the meditation master. While the latter does not function precisely as a priest, and is a midwife to the meditator’s spiritual rebirth rather than a validating officiant, his presence is taken for granted as a practical necessity. And though the emphasis here is more on inner achievement than specified physical ritual actions, the meditational technique itself is not optional. Only by its faithful performance can the desired spiritual results be guaranteed.

A second characteristic of the sacramental is that it involves individual action and attitude. If we take the Catholic eucharist as an example, certain requirements are made of the communicant, which, though not an obvious part of the formal ritual action performed by the priest, are an integral part of the sacrament, as necessary to its efficacy as the priestly action. Thus the communicant is expected to have made confession to a priest shortly before the sacrament’s enactment, not to have eaten other food for a period before, and to be in a repentant and devout frame of mind. So too it is assumed that he or she is a believing and baptized Catholic.

If such is the case with the Catholic eucharist, *mutatis mutandis* the same is true for Theravāda meditation—perhaps indeed even more essentially. Of course the mechanical orthodoxy of meditational procedure, the previously noted pattern of seating, breathing, and instruction by a recognized meditation master is to be observed. So

also are the ethical precepts—no lying, stealing, no intoxicants, sexual chastity, and no killing, even of insects. (In one case I know of there had been a discreet previous spraying of the premises to get rid of an infestation of fire-ants. And a mosquito *repellant* was allowed on the scene. Spiders were to be ignored as were also flies.) There is to be no eating of meat, no sleeping on “high luxurious beds,” no use of bodily adornments, and abstention from outside activities and amusements during the days of meditational concentration.

But of course the center of true importance and the arena of sacramental action, so to speak, is the inward effort and attitude of the meditator. These are absolutely essential to any salvific result. Consequently, since such attitudes are not exclusively determined by creedal affirmations, formal adherence to a given statement of faith is of lesser importance than in most Christian sacramental contexts.

The third characteristic of the sacramental is that it must provide an essential spiritual result. Here “essential” should be understood as forwarding the quest from, or providing a guarantee of, salvation. To quote:

In the Christian community sacraments are acts of worship that are understood... to give access to an intimate union with the divine and to be efficacious for salvation.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the sacrament of baptism makes one a member-in-care of the spiritual body of Christ; that of confirmation makes that membership conscious and integral; the eucharist enables the communicant to take something of the divine being into his own being; extreme unction prepares the believer for death by forgiveness of outstanding sinfulness. These sacraments are salvationally efficacious, i.e. eternal life in a transcendent Heaven, if performed by a validly ordained priest, and undergirded by the lay participant’s sincere efforts, as already described.

In Theravāda Buddhism it is the meditational discipline, as previously noted, that is the one and only valid means of achieving the essential spiritual good of enlightenment, i.e. ultimate, final salvation. And in its own context it is as integrally related to its cosmologically-“theologically” conceived universe as are the

Christian sacraments to the Christianly-conceived universe. The various levels of meditational attainment are not simply rootless mystical states of mind but are organically interwoven with the total universe and final destiny of man as conceived by Buddhism.

Thus in the Theravāda world-view there are thirty-one planes of existence. Four are sub-human (existence in the hells, as beast, as starving ghost, and demonic spirit)—a kind of penal servitude of indefinite length and varied sufferings; and there are twenty-six realms superior to the human in which existence ranges from a mere nine million years up to eighty-four thousand *kalpas* on the thirty-first and highest level. A *kalpa* you may recall, is of a duration which has scarcely begun in the time it would take for the wearing away of a solid rock a cubic mile in volume, by the light touch of a bird's wing every hundred years.

And how does the human being gain admission to these other-than-human realms? To sub-human existence admission is by means of evil attitudes and actions; to the first six of the super-human it is by virtuous deeds and right attitudes. But to the twenty highest, meditational attainment must be added to moral virtue. The level of attainment in rebirth status directly corresponds to one's degree of mastery of the successively higher four jhānic and four formless meditational stages. *Thus* does the meditational discipline gear into the actual universe.<sup>4</sup>

Two qualifications must be made here, though they only confirm the conclusion that in Theravāda Buddhism there is no salvation outside the meditational discipline. The first qualification is that the attainment of final enlightenment and resulting final Nibbāna is, with one minor exception, possible only on the human level. That is, even the inhabitants of the 84,000 *kalpa*-long highest level of immaterial existence must in the end return to human status to attain final enlightenment. And the second qualification is that there *is* a mode of bypassing the traditional but elaborate and difficult meditative discipline that produces existence in these higher realms for long ages: that of attaining Nibbana directly. It is the *vipassanā* or insight method, disdained by such classicists as Buddhaghosa, but much in vogue in Theravāda Buddhism today. But note carefully: *Vipassanā* is also a meditational method. Its basic pattern is but a modification of the classic form. It aims at produc-



ing in the meditator an existential, pervasive awareness that all tangible entities of experience are *anatta* (empty of independent substantial reality), *anicca* (impermanent), and *dukkha* (unsatisfying). When this awareness has been fully existentialized by insight-meditation, the state of *arhat* or enlightenment is achieved. Thus again even this less complicated and less physically rigorous method of the attainment of salvation—the underlying goal of all sacraments—is a *meditational* technique. And, as noted previously, sooner or later—even though later be millions of years—this means of salvation *must* be employed; there is no other way.

Before proceeding to the final aspect of the sacramental to be found in Theravāda meditation, possible doubts concerning the seeming absence of “grace” in the Buddhist structure must be addressed; for the invisible grace that is received via a sacrament implies a Grantor of Grace, i.e. a deity, a greater who grants unmerited grace to the lesser and suppliant being. But Buddhism, as noted, especially in its Theravāda form, is avowedly non-theistic. The Buddha’s last words to his disciples were that they must be a lamp unto themselves, working out their own salvation by becoming aware of the nature of things as they truly are. Where is there sacramental grace in such a context?

Yet grace *is* present even here, in two forms. We might term them the hidden divinity factor. First there was (is) the Buddha. The coming of a Buddha into the human world is no mere casual accident; it is the result of a conscious decision made by a long-ago man to become a Buddha for the explicit purpose of rescuing mankind from the ignorance which produces rebirth. This purpose can only be fulfilled as the result of many eons of conscious endeavor to obtain a Buddha’s insight and powers. Thus while Gotama Buddha may have been theoretically only a man, a way-shower and not a deity, what a man (!) he had become after those endless ages of self discipline—a universally, supremely Enlightened One, the one true saviour of men! The Pāli scriptures consistently portray him with such powers as make Jesus’ miracle workings seem puny by comparison—though the two sets of miraculous powers are usually of a quite different sort.

Even so it would be unthinkable for a Theravāda Buddhist to call Buddha a “god.” And why? Because to do so would be to demean

and belittle him. Let the “gods” create their worlds and perform their magic; the Buddha was mighty and omniscient beyond such trivial powers and doings. Yet no one who has seen a Theravāda Buddhist bow before a Buddha image, or heard a believer speak the name “Buddha” can doubt that for him or her the Buddha functioned and continues to function as saving deity, no matter what is *said* doctrinally. When I asked a Burmese Buddhist layman whether a person who was in need were to send out a spiritual S.O.S. toward the Buddha—who technically has disappeared from human ken into trackless Nibbāna—would receive help, his reply was instantaneous: “Of course!” And as we know this dogmatically suppressed theistic potential of the Theravādin Buddha exploded into supertheistic proportions in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The other sort of grace is what I would call *structural* grace. Very simply put this means that the existence of the possibility of Nibbānic attainment, available to all men through the “sacramental” means of meditation, is nothing less than an unmerited, not humanly produced, gift of “grace.” What if there *were* no such opportunity? Not even meditation could produce salvation. But as proclaimed by the Buddhas, it *is* there at the end of the meditational road. This ultimate situational or structural grace has been clearly set forth in the well-known *Udana* passage:

There is an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an uncompounded; if there were not, there would not be an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded. But because there *is* an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an uncompounded, therefore there is an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded.<sup>5</sup>

And why should this be so? Enough only to know that it *is* there and to avail oneself of it.

The fourth and final sacramental quality to be noted is the “real presence” in the sacramental transaction of the “religious moreness,”<sup>6</sup> the transcendent. In the Christian sacraments this transcendence is held to be present in the invisible spiritual actualities of forgiveness of sins, in membership in the fellowship of true believers, in partaking of the mystical body of Christ, and in a valid hope of eternal life.

The equivalent “real presence” in the Buddhist context, Nibbānic attainment, is integral and central to the meditational

discipline. The hope of this attainment hovers luminously all along the meditator's path, from the very beginning, like the biblical pillar of fire leading onward toward the promised land. As witness to the hope of final consummation is the meditator's perceptible growth in the four illimitable qualities of compassion, loving-kindness, joy in the joy of others, and serenity.

But in the final stages of meditational progress there is also a *direct* experience of the Nibbānic reality, specifically set forth in the Pāli scriptures. First, one becomes a stream-enterer (*sotapanna*). The evidence of this is a momentary flash of Nibbānic awareness—an awareness of such clarity and of a quality that transcends any and all previously experienced states of consciousness. One knows without a shadow of doubt: This is It! At this stage the hovering luminescence, so to speak, has become a spark of light, a tasting of a measureless awareness, within the meditator's own being. At first it is only a momentary flash, but if one persists in the path of meditation, these momentary flashes become more sustained and frequent, finally producible at will. The meditator is now free forever from sub-human rebirth, with only seven more rebirths remaining before final Nibbānic attainment. Three more stages of this growing awareness are distinguished: the *sakadagamin* or once-returner to embodied existence; *anāgamin* or non-returner to human existence but destined to rebirth in a higher-than-human realm before final Nibbāna; and the *arhat* or enlightened one whose present life is filled with the Nibbānic essence and who therewith has ended embodied existence forever. Gautama Buddha in the forty-five years of embodied life after his enlightenment at age thirty-five was a Supreme Arhat so to speak.

Here then at the end of, and as the result of, the fulfillment of the meditative discipline and the mastering of its techniques, is the maximization of the Real Presence of the ultimate and only true Reality; religious moreness has become the religious maximum and consummation; the successful meditator has achieved the Sacramental Absolute Presence of Nibbāna. Thus the meditative discipline has finally and completely fulfilled its salvific purpose.

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, unusual and emergency situations (as of imminent death) where in the absence of an ordained priest, a layman may act in a priestly capacity. But these are highly unusual situations; the established sacramental system is not thereby invalidated.

<sup>2</sup> This formulation is that of Prof. Ninian Smart, given at an informal discussion; he would probably not approve the application made here.

<sup>3</sup> Monika K. Hellwig, "Christian Sacraments", *Encyclopedia of Religion*. ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1987, Vol. 12, p. 504b.

<sup>4</sup> See author's *Theravāda Meditation: The Transformation of Yoga*. University Park: Penn State Press, 1980, Chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup> *The History of Buddhist Thought*, E.J. Thomas. Barnes and Noble, New York: 1951, p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> A phrasing of Professor Kees Bolle.

*Report on the conference*

“THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS AND CRITIQUE OF  
CULTURE IN THE DAYS OF GERARDUS VAN DER  
LEEuw (1890-1950)”

HANS G. KIPPENBERG

From 1-4 May 1989 a conference was held in Groningen (Netherlands), dealing with the History of Religions and Critique of Culture in the Days of Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950). The conference was held under the auspices of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) and the Dutch Association of Historians of Religion and was organised by the department for Religious Studies at the State University of Groningen. It was sponsored by the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, the Dutch ministry of education and science and the Dutch organisation for scientific research.

The conference concerned itself with an aspect of G. van der Leeuw's work that until now has been nearly completely neglected: i.e. his attempt to incorporate non-Christian religions into a criticism of the European culture. With that Van der Leeuw took up an older intellectual tradition that was current in his days and which expressed itself in various forms inside and outside the universities.

The conference was opened with the issue of two conflicting traditions in the scientific study of religion: H. G. Kippenberg: “Gedanken zur romantischen Tradition in der Religionswissenschaft” and K. Rudolph: “Die religionskritischen Traditionen in der Religionswissenschaft”. At the time of G. van der Leeuw there were also other scientists of religion who in their research proceeded partly from a romantic point of view. The contributions of R. Plantinga (“Romanticism and the History of Religion: the Case of W. B. Kristensen”), B. Gladigow (“Naturwissenschaftliche Modellvorstellungen in der Religionswissenschaft zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen”), M. Pye (“Reflections on the Treatment of

Tradition in Comparative Perspective, with Special Reference to Ernst Troeltsch and Gerardus van der Leeuw”), U. Bianchi (“Between Positivism and Historicism: the Position of R. Pettazoni”) and W. Hofstee (“Gerardus van der Leeuw and the Concept of Primitive Mentality”) all attempted to expose the “intellectual traditions” connected with the discipline between the two wars. Crucial for G. van der Leeuw was a critique of culture acknowledging religion as a “living option” (Z. Werblowsky) for a rational culture (L. Leertouwer, “G. van der Leeuw as a Critic of Culture”; H. te Velde, “Kulturkritik und Religionsreform im Alten Ägypten nach Gerardus van der Leeuw”; Z. Werblowsky in a public Dutch lecture: “Tussen primitief en modern: godsdienstwetenschap, kultuurkritiek en kultuurkrisis”).

Some scientific interpretations of religions were inspired by a critique of culture and adopted by intellectuals outside the universities. Several contributions to the conference reviewed historically this connection between religious studies and some cultural-critical traditions outside the field of religious studies: H. Treiber (“Im Westen nichts Neues: Menschwerdung durch Askese. Sehnsucht nach Askese bei Weber und Nietzsche”); G. Küenzlen (“Die Rezeption der aufklärungskritischen Tradition in der Religionssoziologie Max Webers”); U. Linse (“Asien als Alternative? Die Alternativkulturen der Weimarer Zeit: Reform des Lebens durch Rückwendung zu asiatischer Religiosität”); R. Flasche (“Der Irrationalismus der Zeit zwischen den Weltkriegen und dessen Begründung in der Religionswissenschaft”) and R. Faber (“‘Metaphysik des Heidentums’. Archaisierende Zivilisationskritik als antisemitische Religionsphilosophie”).

However, the conference did not restrict itself to a historical approach. In view of the recent attempts that have been made to redefine our discipline, the conference evaluated the possibilities, limits and dangers of such a connection. For this reason the structures of interpretations of religion between the two wars were reviewed. Besides the phenomenology dealt with by D. Wiebe (“Phenomenology of Religion as a Religio-Cultural Quest: Gerardus van der Leeuw and the Subversion of the Scientific Study of Religion”) and J. Waardenburg (“European Images of Other Religions and the Program of a Phenomenology of Religion”) the

revival of the myth of matriarchy (H. Zinser: "Der Mythos des Mutterrechts in der Zeit zwischen den Weltkriegen") and of concern in ritual (R. Schlesier: "Prolegomena zum Beitrag von Jane Harrison zur antiken griechischen Religionsgeschichte") were discussed.

A last section devoted itself to the apparent similarities in the conception of religion and of art so characteristic for the time of G. van der Leeuw (M. Barasch: "The Religious Symbol in the Interpretation of Art"; A. Assmann, "Das Verhältnis von Kunst und Religion unter den Bedingungen der Moderne am Beispiel von T. S. Eliots *The Waste Land*"; K. Hoffmann-Curtius, "'Primitivismus' und 'entartete' Kunst").

During the conference a comparison was introduced to characterise the interests of intellectuals in religion after the enlightenment: The enlightenment opened the windows to other alien cultures. Studying these alien cultures the non enlightened elements of our own culture become intelligible. Due to the cultural impoverishment deplored then by many intellectuals as a result of Enlightenment, irrational elements in alien cultures became witnesses for a broader conception of human existence.

All contributions were introduced by Dutch scholars of religion attending the conference. Some of these opening statements will be also published in the proceedings of the conference.

Groningen/Bremen

HANS G. KIPPENBERG

*Report on the Warsaw Conference on*

“THE STUDIES OF RELIGIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES METHODOLOGICAL AND  
THEORETICAL RELATIONS”, WARSAW-JABLONNA 5-9  
SEPTEMBER 1989

H. G. KIPPENBERG and D. WIEBE

The conference was sponsored by the Polish Society for the Study of Religion with the sponsorship of the Polish Academy of Sciences and held under the auspices of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). The conference was held in the Palace of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Jablonna. Though primarily concerned to focus serious attention on central problems in the study of religion it was also intended to continue the *dialogue between East European and West European Scholars* in this field. Participants in the conference included scholars from Poland, Lithuania (USSR), Denmark, Western Germany, United Kingdom, USA, Canada, South Korea, Tchechoslovakia, Prof. W. Tyloch, President of the Polish Society for the Study of Religion and Prof. M. Pye, Secretary-General of the IAHR.

An earlier regional conference on this issue was held in Warsaw, the proceedings of which were published under the title: “Current Progress in the Methodology of the Science of Religions” ed. by W. Tyloch Warsaw 1984, which was itself preceded by the conference 1973 held in Turku, Finland with the proceedings published as “Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology” ed. by L. Honko The Hague 1979.

As is common in any discussions of methodology in this field the discussion seemed to start from assumptions of a special or unique independence of the discipline of the ‘history of religions’ from other sciences. Problems with such conventional assumptions, however, soon emerged in the papers presented and in the discussions over a range of alternative possibilities. Only a brief outline of the major themes and recurrent issues broached can be provided, but



papers often ranged over issues that could be classified within several of the following divisions.

Several papers were devoted to matters of *conceptual clarification* as, for example, Prof. T. Margul's 'The Social Elements in the Religious Phenomenon' and Prof. J. Szmyd's 'Empirical Aspects of Religious Irrationalism as the Object of Scientific Research'. A general clarification of the theme of the conference was attempted by Prof. W. Tyloch in his paper on 'The Studies of Religion in the Context of the Social Sciences'. Dr. T. Sodeika's 'The Structure of Faith in the Context of Philosophy' on the other hand concerned itself with the role of the history of religious ideas. Issues of definition and taxonomy were raised for discussion by Dr. A. Wojtowicz' 'Structural and Phenomenological Approaches in the Sociology of Religion' and Prof. P. Antes 'Moslem Mysticism in the Context of Social Sciences'. Two papers were dedicated to clarifying the changing character of the place of Religious Studies in a Marxist context: Prof. I. Hodovsky's paper on 'The development of the Study of Religion in CSSR' and Prof. J. Danecki's paper 'The Communist Dilemma: Islam and Communism in the Arab World'.

Another cluster of papers concerned themselves primarily with the *role of empirical studies* as a critical factor in the study of religion. They involved reports on research and reflection on the influence of the social sciences on this work. Papers here included that by Prof. M. Pye on 'Philology and Fieldwork in the Study of Japanese Religion', by Dr. K. Knott on 'The Role of Religious Studies in Understanding Ethnic Experience' and Prof. Sung-Hae Kim's paper on the Analects of Confucius: 'Multidisciplinary Research: Should it be carried out as a Common Project or as the Integration of one Scholar?'

Two papers directed attention to the question of the role of *interpretation* in the explanation of religion: with respect to the history of religions, Prof. J. Waardenburg's 'Social Sciences and the Study of Islam' and from an anthropological point of view, Prof. A. Geertz's 'The Study of Indigenous Religions in the History of Religions'.

Some papers expressed a concern with the poverty of 'history' in the traditional understanding of 'history of religions' and turned to examination of the role of *explanation and theory in the scientific study of religion* although not to the exclusion of the issue of description.

Papers here include Prof. L. Martin's 'The History of Religions: A Field for Humanistic and Social Science Inquiry'; Prof. D. Wiebe's " 'History of Religions' in the Context of the Social Sciences: From History to Historical Sociology"; Prof. Th. Lawson's 'The Crisis in the Scientific Study of Religion and its Resolution' and Prof. H. G. Kippenberg's 'The function of Religious Studies in the Sociology of Max Weber'.

The discussions ended up in a concluding statement: "The participants in the conference agreed there was some advance in the discussion of methodological issues in the study of religion. A convergence of opinion became apparent with regard to the nature of 'history' that permits reconceiving the history of religions as a human and cultural science. There was also agreement that such a reconceived study of religion would understand "religion" as a reality that interconnects social activities, both implicitly and explicitly.

Of significance in this respect is a shift of attention to the meaning of religion in social interaction. There was general agreement that analysing social processes which are correlate with religious phenomena would require the evaluation and use of innovative social theories and models from cognate disciplines.

Whether such a methodological orientation will prove fruitful must be judged in the context of future research".

H. G. KIPPENBERG and D. WIEBE

## BOOK REVIEWS

### BOOK SURVEY

#### *Indica*

Hauer's name is hardly known to our younger contemporaries. His is not the only case of a Protestant India-missionary in whose life trans-Christian religious and spiritual struggles combined with indological scholarship. His (at that time) pioneering work on yoga and *vratyā* (the term occurs only once in the new *Encycl. of Religions*, although it should invite comparison with Wikander's *arische Männerbund*, especially as Hauer seeks to identify not an *arische Männerbund* but non-brahmanic and pre-Aryan layers of Indian religion) is largely unknown. His biography exhibits a spiritual man's struggle for renewal. His ambivalent involvement with, and subsequent turning away from, National-Socialism left a blemish on his name, though in this respect he should not be compared to the Dutchman Jan de Vries. Perhaps Jung and Eliade (about whom future research may still hold surprises) might be better analogies. Buber's judgment of Hauer seems to be as noble as it is correct: there are mistakes "that do not disgrace a person as long as he struggles to distinguish, in the movement which he joins, between truth and falsehood, between...faithfulness to, and betrayal of, "the Spirit". Ms. Dierks<sup>1</sup> has given us a solid and well-researched study, imbued with sympathy to its subject but never beating around the bush or sweeping anything under the carpet. It is a contribution not only to the history of German Indology, but also to German *Geistesgeschichte*.

Yoga and meditation are "in". Vivian Worthington<sup>2</sup> is a Yoga practitioner, enthusiast, teacher and gopeller. His *History of Yoga* (including not only the six standard systems but also Buddhism, Zen, Lamaism, Vedanta) may be useful to interested laymen and prospective enthusiasts. The book certainly realises its intention to give a general overview not only of yoga but also of its history, unencumbered by the "confusing complexity of the academic tract".

The latter quality can, fortunately, be attributed to J. Bronkhorst's formidable erudition and philological *akribia*<sup>3</sup>. The author claims to identify two distinct major traditions of meditation which, however, are more in the nature of Weberian "ideal types" than historical realities. His main purpose is "to find out what early Buddhist meditation was by finding out

what it was not''. The method employed is therefore to study not merely Hindu and Jaina texts, but especially the both explicit and implicit polemics in Buddhist literature. There can be no doubt about the author's learning, though many a reader will remain unconvinced by his historical theses. Good philology alone does not necessarily make good history, and arguments to the effect that text X was influenced by text Y (or vice versa) on the basis of circumstantial indications, guesses or hunches, have to be handled very carefully. The almost obsessive desire to reconstruct "early" viz. "primitive" Buddhism seems to take us back to the turn of the century. But the author is surely in a strong position when throwing out the challenge to critics: it is not enough to say that his argument "has not been proved...[only] really constructive criticism will produce a better theory".

Translations of, and commentaries on, the Gita there are galore, and there is no reason to assume that the stream will ever cease—at least as long as there are people who are convinced that the Gita has an eternal message, and there are authors who feel the urge to communicate this message to others. Prof. Gotschalk's translation and commentary<sup>4</sup> are not without scholarly merits, but are clearly and unapologetically subservient to their edifying purpose.

The edifying intent is less obvious in the fine anthology of devotional "hymns of praise" (*stuti*, *stava*, *stotra*) to the gods, some translated for the first time into German, others for the first time into a western language. Ms. Bühnemann's anthology<sup>5</sup> translates 21 such hymns, choosing those of a devotional rather than philosophical character and of medium length. The selection is useful, the notes more than adequate, and the whole will give the reader a good insight into Hindu devotional attitudes to their pantheon.

Hinduism is one of the "iconic religions" par excellence, and it even allows you (if you like that sort of word-games) to speak of "aniconic images"—which simply means images that are not actual representations of some definite outside figure. Seeing icons is, of course, always and in all religions, seeing something "beyond" the idol. This is so obvious a commonplace that one wonders why anyone should want to waste time on making this point. But many Christian authors, especially when bitten by the ecumenical or dialogual bug, are apparently subject to the irrepressible urge to demonstrate that their ecumenical Christianity, far from misunderstanding or despising "pagan idolatries" the way earlier generations of missionaries did, can and does, on the contrary, interpret them with profound sympathy and understanding. But however this may be, every book by Prof. Diana Eck is instructive, scholarly and beautiful. *Darshan*<sup>6</sup> is no exception.

A companion volume to *Darshan* is the Waghorne-Cutler volume on "The Embodiment of Divinity in India"<sup>7</sup>. Ten contributors dealing with the same subject can make for a either a chaotic or (with divine grace) an integrated though multi-faceted book, especially when some authros exhibit more than empathy with their subject but an attitude of actual devotion. In this particular case the multi-faceted result is so rich that it defies a summary, especially as the "embodiment" of the divine can take place in both flesh (holy men: by what process do they become divinised?) and stone (images). S. Inglis's chapter on "Possession and Pottery" brings this out most clearly, an added dimension of complexity being provided by the fact that not only gods can be creators and destroyers, but that holy images are often destroyed after the accomplishment of the ritual purpose for which they were made. Surely this volume is a better guide to the understanding of religious iconography than the polemical-sarcastic description, by the prophet known as Deutero-Isaiah, of an "idol workshop" (Is. 41:6-7; 44:11-20).

*Hindu Goddesses*<sup>8</sup> is a useful book, and readers should not be put off by the subtitle which seems to be a polite and slightly ridiculous bow in the direction of feminism. The Hindu pantheon is of bewildering immensity, the female part of it no less than the male: Lakshmi, Parvati, Sarasvati, Kali, Mahadevi, the Matrkas and Mahavidyas and so on ad infinitum (almost). Of necessity an author can deal with a selection only, even if his book had 2800 pp. and not 281 pages. Discussing the goddesses is, almost by definition, not discussing them alone but ever so many other aspects of Hinduism—in fact Hinduism itself. This well-written book should be welcomed by students, and even by scholars already familiar with Hinduism and the Hindu deities.

*Servants of the Goddess*<sup>9</sup> is not so much a monograph about the goddess Minaksi (or even her husband, the god Sundaresvara) but a first-rate anthropological case- and field-study of the priesthood officiating in her temple in Madurai (South India). There are plenty of descriptions of temples and rituals, but very few analyses of the function and role of priests, their internal organisation as well as their place in the larger society, not to speak of their problems of adaptation to modern pressures (e.g., temple reform!). Tables and maps enhance the value of this excellent book in an excellent series.

Still about goddesses, the largely unknown history (or, to be more exact, pre-history) of Devi—and she is worshipped under ever so many names—remains a bit mysterious. The Aryan invaders had mainly male gods (cf. the Vedic evidence). The role of the goddesses increased, so it has been argued, as Aryan and non-Aryan religions merged, although

here the historian of religion, unlike the pure philologist, always asks whether an examination of textual evidence can really give us the whole story. But texts are often all we have, and Dr. Coburn<sup>10</sup> wisely concentrated on the *Devimahatmya* which, in spite of its date, still seems the best source for an understanding of the Shakta tradition. How a source can be skilfully exploited, not only by philological analysis in historical perspective but by judicious comparison with puranic and other mythological material, is convincingly demonstrated by the author whose description of the sanskritised form of goddess-worship is, in the words of H.H. Ingalls, "a notable scholarly achievement". The carefully annotated translations of the hymns are an added boon.

In spite of the current fashion of goddesses, some scholars think that it is permitted to deal also with gods. Immense as the Indian pantheon is, every god really deserves an individual monograph. Courtright's study of Ganesha,<sup>11</sup> that "Protean God", is a model (and a cause of envy) for every prospective writer of monographs on Indian gods. The opening chapter on "The Making of a God" is magisterial, and so are the discussions of the mythology, worship, and related ritual, psychological and religious themes. Although Ganesha is a favourite all over India, the detailed analysis of the god "in a regional setting: Maharashtra" is a valuable exercise in focussed research. The author deals with the Hindu Ganesha only, including his sexlessness, celibacy and possible mother-fixation. He should, therefore, not be taken to task for not pursuing the Buddhist-tantric career of the elephant god (or rather elephant-headed pair) as the symbol of sexual fulfilment and supreme bliss, since the subject of this tutelary Buddhist deity (Ganesha viz. Vinayaka, Jap. Kangiten, Daisho-den etc.) is outside the scope of this fine study.

No matter how popular and beloved Ganesha may be, he can hardly compete with Krishna, especially as regards the attention the latter draws of late in the West. When over twenty years ago we laid down Milton Singer (ed.) *Krishna* (1966), we knew that we had learned lots of important things, but that the last word had not yet been said. The subject of Krishna *an und für sich* is taken up again and ably treated by Noel Sheth<sup>12</sup> in what was originally his Harvard dissertation under Prof. Ingalls who also wrote the introduction (as he had done to the Singer volume). The author's method is strictly textual-cum-phenomenological, an approach no less legitimate than the currently much favoured sociological-anthropological one. The progressive "divinisation" of Krishna, and hence also of his "theological" and devotional aspects, from mere beginnings in the *Harivamsa* ("hero worship") via the *Vishnupurana* ("orthodox piety") to the full-blown mystical piety in the *Bhagavata* is con-

vincingly described in this valuable addition to the aforementioned informal monograph series on Hindu deities.

The collective volume edited by S.J. Gelberg<sup>13</sup> deals as much with Krishna Consciousness (and especially America's receptiveness for it) as with all the well-worn and almost hackneyed problems of the "new" religions viz. cults (is the Krishna movement still "Hindu"? does it represent a religious revival or a cop-out offering an exotic alternative to alienated youngsters? how much "brainwashing" is there in it? and how to analyse the diffuse as well as organised hostility to this "religion of zombies"?). Still, the volume is useful and very instructive, and should be welcomed especially by readers interested in ISKCON.

The 1985 conference on "Krishna Consciousness in the West" has become a book which can be considered a sequel to the one mentioned in the preceding paragraph.<sup>14</sup> In fact, some contributors are the same and the volume, as is inevitable in any study of the new cults, deals not only with Krishna devotion, ISKCON, the American reaction to Hinduism as an American youth movement etc., but also with the responses of Christian and Jewish organisations (which exhibit everything but the ecumenical pluralism about which they talk so much), the mobilisation of psychiatry, and the anti-cult movements in general. (Cf. also the review-article in NUMEN xxvii, 1980, p. 155 ff.). Being close to the centenary of the Chicago World Parliament of Religion, one cannot help wondering what Vivekananda would have said had he foreseen the Hare Krishna invasion of the U.S. and other parts of the World.

A kind of precursor to the last-mentioned volume is Larry Shinn's *The Dark Lord*.<sup>15</sup> It is a fine, comprehensive, and eminently readable account of the Hare Krishna movement with again much emphasis on the cult scare, "Conversion or Brainwashing?", deprogramming etc. Sometimes one feels tempted to complain about this surfeit of "new cults" literature, especially as the irrational hysteria is not going to be cured by any number of even good books. The anti-cult hostility has little to do with the cults themselves but a lot with the deep-seated inner insecurity of the anti-cultists—an abyss into which they will be the very last to look.

Fortunately not all Krishna research is ISKCON-centred. In fact, Krishna is also a convenient starting point for a study of one of the most important expressions of Indian culture in general and religion in particular: drama. Sanskritists have no doubt received the necessary enlightenment from Bharata's *Natyashastra* and the commentaries (especially Abhinavagupta)—all mentioned in Prof. Wulff's<sup>16</sup> bibliography. Others have been initiated by Sylvain Lévi's *Le Théâtre Indien*, published a century ago. Prof. Donna Wulff's study of Rupa

Gosvami's classic, originally a Harvard Ph.D. thesis and subsequently published as vol. 43 of the A.A.R. Series, makes available to western readers a religious-aesthetic world hitherto accessible to Sanskritists only. The reader should not be put off by p. 1 of the introduction with its irrelevant motto from Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn*—a declaration which is not in the least novel or surprising but merely utterly wrong—since the book is a solid piece of research on a significant aspect of Sanskrit drama: its central role in Krishna devotion and in the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement. The author concentrates on Rupa Gosvami's classic, discusses the antecedents, structure and significance of the drama, analyses the "characters" (= symbolic significance) of Krishna, Radha and some of the secondary *dramatis personae*, and gives a summary of the *Vidagdhamadhava* as well as an annotated translation of the 7th act. No reader faced with 184 pp. of text plus almost 70 pp. of notes can complain of lack of scholarly apparatus.

I don't know whether Tamal Krishna Goswami's publication<sup>17</sup> is, or is not, an answer to prayers Prof. Wulff may have uttered when writing her dissertation. The author, a scholar, devotee and ISKCON activist ("May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna Caitanya, who danced in front of the cart of Sri Jagannatha, be all glorified!" says the invocation preceding the introduction) decided not to translate but to write a Sanskrit drama in English, original but closely following the classic models and based, down to the smallest detail, on the classic sources. The Jagganatha deity, which has spread from Puri all over, has now also reached the West through the Hare Krishna movement. Part i of the book is the drama (which may be read by itself); part ii is a commentary by way of an account of "the craft of Sanskrit drama". A book should be judged by its explicit intentions. Its utter lack of critical interest in the historical, social and possibly even political aspects of the Jagganatha cult does not detract from what the book is and wants to be.

Less monographic and more integrative than some of the books mentioned is Klostermaier's volume on the soteriology of Indian "theistic traditions".<sup>18</sup> Apart from the author's joke that he wrote for his own benefit, this is a serious and important work (and the author possibly did derive some benefit from writing it). He tries, with moderate success, to find "a unifying pattern" behind the diversity of myths, rituals and other expressions of soteriological theory and practice. What does the confusing variety of the Hindu tradition have to say on the subject? The author distinguishes three major living theistic traditions (Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism), presents them against the background of the basic Vedic tradition, and then proceeds to discuss the mythology,



iconography and devotional practices of each. Some pages are miracles of compression, though occasionally the reader feels that important questions have not been raised, let alone answered. Although ostensibly concerned with "theistic traditions", the author occasionally seems to come down on the nontheistic side, but how much can even the best writing about Indian religion, no matter how dense and compressed, hope to achieve in 552 pp. "only"?

Useful contributions to the study of religion are often made in an indirect way. Prof. Daniel's study<sup>19</sup> is not easily labelled but, as the title indicates, it deals with religion via culture-and-personality by moving easily along the equilibrium-disequilibrium viz. compatibility-incompatibility axis (or, to be more exact, the varying and "fluid" degrees of combinability). The theoretical interest of the book resides in the way the author supplements the by now traditional approaches and methods of Geertz, Turner, Schneider and others by his recourse to semiotics i.e., his insistence on the importance of that multifaceted thing called "sign" (which really means a return to Peirce and the application of his insights to ethnography). Signs are not clear-cut but fluid. Approaching the nature of a "person" via the signs employed by his culture is an instructive and very often amusing exercise, especially when performed by the both erudite and imaginative mind of a native bi-lingual (Tamil and English) scholar.

Tamil religiosity is usually, and not without reason, described as being of the extreme Bhakti-type. Also non-Indologists and non-Tamilists have read, and been impressed by, the "Hymns of the Tamil Saints". A valuable addition to this literature is Norman Cutler's translation and analysis<sup>20</sup> of the devotional poetry (2nd half of the first millenium A.D.) of five poets and one poetess. The author appears to be genuinely *ergriffen* by his texts, but also readers less given to *Ergriffenheit* will be grateful for his erudite and insightful presentation of these records of the experience of the divine, and even more for his skillful literary analysis (viz. use of the methods of "rhetorical criticism") in discussing the relationship between Tamil poetry and Tamil religion.

*Unde malum?* Whence "evil"? This most basic question and preoccupation of all mythologies, theologies and philosophical systems can, surely, not be absent also from Indian mythology. Of course the question "whence evil" must be preceded by a preliminary clarification of what we mean by "evil", especially in a system in which the gods too are not always, or necessarily, or unqualifiedly "good" in the western ethical and theological sense. What the present writer thinks of Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty's style and method has been spelled out in a review-article in

NUMEN xxix, 1982, p. 125 ff. That her dazzling and ebullient as well as witty and stimulating (even if occasionally stimulating to dissent) combination of erudition and originality can leave some critics dizzy or even upset seems only normal. That her deliberate refusal to tie herself down to one method should expose her to the accusation of—*horribile dictu*—eclecticism by the devotees of academic tunnel-vision is equally to be expected. And those who like everything clear-cut are necessarily upset by scholarship that sees fluidity and the constant play of permutations and combinations in mythological accounts. Sustained and cogent arguments are often enlivened by (sometimes exaggerated) *obiter dicta* that deliberately renounce careful verbal qualifications since the necessary qualifications are inherent in the argument as a whole. The author remains true to her uniquely individual style and flair also in her discussion of evil in Hindu mythology.<sup>21</sup> Mythology presents a “multiplicity of possible solutions”, and by drawing on Vedic, puranic, ritual, bhakti-devotional and other material as well as on historical (can the development of Hindu mythology be periodised?), theological (Hindu theology, of course), psychological (mainly Freudian) and structuralist (binary oppositions) methods, the author succeeds in presenting an analysis that is as bewilderingly complex as the problem which it addresses. There are too many loose ends for this being the “definitive” book on the subject. But what a pleasure to feel completely dizzy rather than stolidly academic after laying down a work of consummate scholarship!

From a consideration of evil to that of karma it is but one step. After all, did not “the father of us all”, Max Weber, tell us that the doctrine of karma was the most complete and thorough “theodicy” ever? In the aforementioned book on evil the author asserted that the law of karma was an unsatisfactory answer (and too logical to boot) to the problem of theodicy. *Karma and Rebirth* is thus a logical, and highly satisfactory (though far from perfect) sequel. Altogether—as this reviewer has remarked elsewhere in NUMEN—Doniger O’Flaherty is better as an author than as an editor. Nevertheless the book considered here,<sup>22</sup> which is the outcome of a series of colloquia, is a major contribution if only because the various contributors with their different perspectives make one point in common: there is no doctrine of karma in the singular. What are the historic sources (Vedic, puranic, shastric or other textbooks), the textual formulations *versus* the actual beliefs and attitudes of people, the Buddhist (early Buddhist as well as tantric) and Jaina mutations? Obeyesekere, as an anthropologist, finds sources in Tamil tribal concepts. W. Halbfass shows how later Indian philosophy produced answers of its own. The danger of projecting conditioned reflexes from Buddhology into

Hinduism is omnipresent—perhaps as good a reason as any for insisting on the combination of anthropological methods with close study of the classical texts. But do the latter give us post-factum rationalisations or also a key to *ante factum* motivational structures? How do we draw the lines between the householders accumulation of good karma, the karmayogin's renunciation of the fruits of action (though not of action), and the samnyasin's renunciation of action itself? (Cf. also the difference between *tyaga* and *sanyasa*, a subject mentioned only once and by-the-way in a quotation from Staal). Perhaps the most intriguing problem is that of the transfer of karma (in Hinduism; not, of course, in Buddhism where it is a matter-of course. And even more popular matter-of-course are "merit-sharing" ceremonies after conspicuous good deeds e.g., after returning from a pilgrimage). The spirit of McKim Marriott, who was very active in the conference that gave birth to the book, hovers over much of it although he did not contribute a chapter. A book that leaves the reader deeply satisfied simply because its richness leaves him with more fruitful questions than definitive answers.

No prophetic gift was necessary to foresee that the collective volume on the classical traditions would be followed by one on post-classical developments.<sup>23</sup> This volume too, like its predecessor, is "representative rather than exhaustive". Representative it is indeed, because each of the three sections (The Hindu Context, The Buddhist Context, The Western Context)—five chapters each by acknowledged experts—ends with a critical response by scholars of the calibre of K.H. Potter, L. Schmithausen and Terence Penelhum. The critical responses raise important questions regarding the modern presentations of these doctrines (e.g., are they departures from, or even total misinterpretations of, the classical theories?). Section ii on Buddhism (early Buddhism, little and great traditions, Tibetan Buddhism, Amidism) is in many ways the most intriguing e.g., Schmithausen's argument that merit-transfer is already attested in early Buddhism. JAN Yün-hua's chapter on Chinese Buddhism is one of the most fascinating, at least for readers who believe that the assimilation of Buddhist notions of karma by the Chinese left a legacy of unsolved tensions. The book also takes us to the modern West (i.e. America) and hence discusses the Theosophical Movement and assorted swamis and gurus as well as (rather questionably) assorted western thinkers (especially Jung) alongside of "Modern Hinduism" (Vivekananda, Aurobindo and others). Rebirth seems to fascinate also many westerners in addition to posing problems to them; cf. e.g., Martin Willson, *Rebirth and the Western Buddhist*. Prof. Prebisch's appeal to western Buddhists to create a common framework with Natural Science, though

well-intentioned and perhaps based on profounder knowledge than this reviewer possesses, will give many readers a *déjà vu* sensation of modern Buddhist apologetics at its most naive.

The aforementioned review-article in NUMEN xxix, 1982, also dealt with sex, aggression and violence (p. 124 f.). Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty's short book on the subject<sup>24</sup> (in inverse ratio to the dense and compressed richness of its originality and thoughtfulness) takes up themes already dealt with by her in earlier publications. Here we have a highly original and enlightening study of the *Jaiminiya Brahmana*, viewed not as a foolish digression from Vedic thought but as the record of folklore and oral tradition. A major part of the book consists of original translations, framed by brilliant and insightful introductory and concluding chapters. Brilliant and insightful in many ways: the historian will be fascinated by the arguments regarding a major transformation of Indian cultural assumptions around 900 B.C.; the student of religion (even if he is no professional psychologist) will be fascinated by the ever-relevant, 900 B.C. to late 20th cent. A.D., discussion of our deepest desires, fears, obsessions and nightmares as expressed in rituals, myths, stories and dreams—more especially by those which make “this Brahmana different from All Other Brahmanas”.

Dreams, mentioned at the end of the preceding paragraph, are one of the main subjects in another book by the same author.<sup>25</sup> This is not a philosophical or psychological book using Indian (Mahabharata, Ramayana, especially Yogavasishta and other) material but, on the contrary, a book of philosophical and psychological importance because it is a brilliant as well as witty expert's study of myths and tales. What is so-called reality and what are so-called dreams? Are our dreams “dreams within dreams”? Is our “reality” an illusion from which one day we shall wake up? Or is it the dream of a god (or gods)—unless the reality of gods is one of our dreams? Does the “binary opposition” illusion—reality make any sense, or the same sense in every culture? Whose consciousness is reflected in our “awarenesses”? The author tells and analyses stories from the vast fund of Indian mythology, but in the telling poses questions about our matter-of-course assumptions regarding the nature of reality, the nature of alleged contradictions or incompatibilities (viz. the sacred law of non-contradiction), and the nature of the time-process. For the benefit of her readers, the author spells out the obvious applications to our culture-conditioned axioms. Clearly she knows her Plato, Freud, Jung, Piaget and Gombrich (illusion in art!) at least as well as the non-Indologist professionals. And she knows how myth and “ordinary reality” interlock, and what this interplay means for the Hindu (and by definition also non-Hindu, because human) understanding of human experience.

Since the last paragraphs amounted to what almost seems to be a kind of “Wendy Festival”, it is time to turn to other subjects and other authors, especially to modern Hinduism. In Asia, perhaps more than in Europe, religious renewal movements frequently exhibit more than simply a political dimension: they are closely associated (as precursors or companion-ideologies) with nationalist revivals. H-J. Klimkeit’s account of political Hinduism<sup>26</sup> does not attempt a systematic sociological analysis but wants to present, as the subtitle indicates, “Indian thinkers between religious reform and political awakening”. After a survey of classical political thought (*rajadharma* on the one hand, and the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya—often called the Macchiavelli of India—on the other, plus plentiful reference to puranic literature) the author presents the leading thinkers of modern India from Bankim and Ghose (the beginnings of nationalism in Bengal) to the ideologists in the Hindi-speaking areas, to reformer-politicians in the Northwest (Dayanand Sarasvati, the Aryasamaj and similar movements), to the Maharashta ideologists (Savarkar, Golwalkar, but especially Tilak), to pan-Indian thought from Vivekananda to Gandhi. A concluding chapter on the main motifs in Hindu political thought restores the overall perspective. The extent to which political and religious awakening and reform were interlaced is illustrated over and over again. Political thinkers make their point by writing commentaries on the *Gita*. It was Tilak (I did not find this detail in Klimkeit, but may have overlooked it) who revived Ganpati, the great festival in honour of the elephant-headed god Ganesha, to a major Indian religious celebration: the price of sugar rises in India in the two weeks preceding Ganpati! Is Tilak an example of the religious dimensions of national awakenings or rather of the political manipulation of traditional religious elements? Perhaps the question is irrelevant or wrongly posed. Lest this short account create a one-sided impression I hasten to add that nobody is more aware than Prof. Klimkeit of anti-religious movements as well in modern India. In fact, exactly ten years before the publication of the study reviewed here, the author published a work on the latter subject.

Prof. Margaret Chatterjee concentrates on Gandhi’s religious thought and message,<sup>27</sup> though she also makes it clear that Gandhi (who was rather unhappy about being cast in the role of the charismatic saint) was “a saint of action rather than of contemplation”. The impact of Christianity on Gandhi has been discussed ever so often, and the author’s account is concise and useful though not revolutionary. Of greater usefulness is the account of the relation of Gandhi’s thought to the whole Indian tradition, including Jainism (from which he probably derived most of his inspiration for *ahimsa*) and Buddhism (a great favorite with his super-secularist disciple Nehru). It is also useful to be reminded once

again of the fact that Gandhi's encounter not only with Buddhism but also with the "Hindu" *Gita* was mediated (in English) through the writings of Sir Edwin Arnold. Although the literature on Gandhi is immense, Prof. Chatterjee's is a useful, sensitive, integrative yet carefully discriminative addition to it.

Gandhi's religious thought could not possibly omit the question of religious pluralism. Prof. Chatterjee quotes one of the Mahatma's sayings "Personally I think the world as a whole will never have, *and need not have* (emphasis added by Z.W.) a single religion". It is, therefore, not surprising that to the avalanche of recent literature on pluralism there has been added a volume on Indian attitudes.<sup>28</sup> The volume, as many others mentioned in this Survey, is the outcome of a conference; fourteen contributors discuss the responses of several of the elements that make up the kaleidoscope that is India: Gandhi, the various neo-Hindu movements (Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Aurobindo and others), Parsees, Indian Muslims, Sikhs and a modern Christian response. That is to say that Indian Christianity is not adequately represented and that neither Buddhists (with the exception of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugee community) nor Jainas have chapters of their own. Nevertheless the volume is a welcome addition to one of the central preoccupations of contemporary religion, although perhaps too much attention is given to theoretical statements and not enough to realities. After all, India is also the land of intolerance, violence and internecine strife par excellence.

The new nationalist-political Hinduism is represented not only by the names figuring in Prof. Klimkeit's aforementioned book but also by other, somewhat more recent and less widely known (in the West) figures. One of these was the Acharya Pravananda, and we should be grateful to Prof. Ninian Smart for giving outsiders a comprehensive account of a remarkable figure whose individuality is not in the least diminished by the obvious influence on him of Vivekananda.<sup>29</sup> The book, written in collaboration with Swami Purnananda, is clearly addressed to western readers and it is precisely they who may feel a little uneasy about what may seem to them to be the excessive megalomania of many an Indian holy man, swami, guru, acharya or what-have-you. What most of them have in common is the modest title "His Divine Holiness", and Pravananda seems to have gone rather far along this road. But this last remark merely illustrates that this reviewer is not an Indian but a narrow-minded, bigoted and biased European.

One of the finest and most instructive books about a very particular and specific Indian reality is D.O. Lodrick's study of goshalas and pinjrapoles

(homes for aged and sick cattle, animal refuges).<sup>30</sup> Sacred cows are a controversial issue, reactions ranging from religious devotion to sneering sarcasms. Some writers commiserate not so much with the “superstitious Hindus” as with the poor cows, those “sacred sufferers” of misguided piety. But there are few scientific studies clarifying the historical background and the actual (economic, ecological and organisational) realities. Lodrick’s fine work covers more or less the whole field: a general consideration of the man-cattle-culture complex, the various types of animal refugees in contemporary India, “distributions, locations and spatial hierarchies”, and the historical developments (as regards attitude to cattle) from the early Indus Valley Civilisations via the Vedic period, *ahimsa* ideology, Krishna-cult, to the influence of Muslim and subsequently European presence. There are a few detailed casestudies, as well as discussion of the management, finances and community support of goshalas, their religious and social functions, and the ecological and economic mechanisms involved. The Appendices giving the texts of various administrative acts as well as maps, examples of questionnaires and surveys enhance the value of this well-written book, a welcome relief after so much theory.

Max Weber has already been mentioned in this Survey. More about the growing industry of critically “re-visiting” Weber will be said in a future Survey. Some of the recent “Weber and India” literature has been referred to by Ursula King in the notes, especially n. 6, to her article in *NUMEN* xxxvi, 1989, p. 94. To conclude this overview of a selection from recent literature on India, attention should be drawn to the volume *Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy and Dissent* edited by S.N. Eisenstadt a.o.<sup>31</sup> The term “orthodoxy” does not have the same meaning in all cultures, but usually refers to the mechanism by which a society defines its “borders” and hence determines who is “inside” and who “outside”. Heterodoxies and dissent can be powerful agents of change and development, and our Weberian conditioned reflexes therefore make us ask whether e.g., Buddhism and Jainism played roles similar to that of Puritanism in Europe. There may be a very small grain of truth in the analogy, but more important for an understanding of development (and especially developments such as capitalism, rationality, “modernisation”) is an identification of the cultural structures of the various civilisations: it is these that determine the widely differing modes of change, development and modernisation. In India the problem is fascinatingly complicated by the dialectics of “affirmation through renunciation” (as the present writer entitled the chapter on modern Hinduism in one of his books). In other words: the role of *tyaga* and *samnyasa* as institutionalised forms of dissent or possibly even as a

“counter-culture” (Romila Thapar). The theoretical problems of civilisational dynamics are outlined by Eisenstadt, followed by a brilliant essay on South India, “The Enemy Within: Idealism and Dissent” by D. Shulman. Two more papers in the book will be mentioned here, without wishing to detract from the value of the other contributions: J.C. Heesterman on “orthodox” and “heterodox” law, and Ilana Silber on “Dissent through Holiness” (the case of the radical renouncer, in this case not in Hinduism but in Theravada societies). A varied yet well-focussed volume.

*Between Symbolism and Magic*

Once upon a time, at any rate many years ago when we were still in nursery-school, we were introduced to the mysticism of letters and numbers (the two are intimately related in cultures that attach numerical values to letters of the alphabet) by Franz Dornseiff’s classic *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*. 2nd ed. 1925. Hellenistic (i.e. Graeco-Roman), Arabic and kabbalistic (*gematria*: wrongly identified with Kabbalah as a whole by general ignorance) number- and letter-symbolism are not the only instances. The popular comparative survey of F.C. Endres (author of *Die Zahl in Mystik und Glauben der Kulturvolker*, 1935, republished in 1951 as *Mystik und Magie der Zahlen*) and Annemarie Schimmel<sup>32</sup> is also illustrated, unlike its predecessors, with pictures, thus giving us a kind of “iconography of number-mysticism”. Prof. Schimmel, in her Introduction, mentions also other studies. As a comparative survey, cutting across many cultures and periods, this popular account should be welcomed by many readers, although specialists in the various civilisations will find reason to complain. *Gematria* as well as other Jewish (not necessarily all of them kabbalistic) systems are inadequately treated. Number symbolism in China is reduced to the concept of *san-chiao* (in the context of the book the term *san-chiao-wei-i* or *han-san-wei-i* should have been used). Instead of showing a picture with the three Super-Sages, a reproduction should have been given of the highest Taoist Triad: the central god holding a small pearl (= oneness), the god to his right holding the yang-yin circle (two emerging out of the undifferentiated one), and the one to his left holding a fan with the yang-yin circle inside (= infinite multiplicity).

The study of Babylonian and Near-Eastern magic texts was launched with a bang by Montgomery’s *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913), but the bang was followed by a long lull, only broken in the thirties and forties by the publication of new material such as the texts inside the magic bowls, Mandaic incantation texts, the Arslan Tash amulet etc. (Cf. Jonas C. Greenfield’s review of Magic Bowls research in the *Gaster*



*Festschrift*, 1975). A major advance is the publication, with excellent introduction, apparatus, translation and notes of "Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity".<sup>33</sup> In addition to 40 plates there are plenty of useful figures in the text. One reader at least was surprised at the authors wasting precious space on rejecting Cyrus Gordon's untenable views (p. 15), instead of simply stating that the liquid in the bowls (having absorbed the magic power of the inscription) was drunk. The authors are clearly aware of this possibility (p. 16), but find no evidence of such a custom in the Mesopotamian, as distinct from the the "modern" (i.e., Islamic) period. But precisely folk practices and magic have more continuity than is often assumed by superconscientious scholars. At least the remarks of Kriss & Kriss-Heinrich (vol. 2 is mentioned in the bibliography) on the *Schreckbecher* (*tāsāt ar-ragfa* viz. *tāsāt a-tarba*) should have been mentioned. And if *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islam* seems to be irrelevantly late, a reference to similar drinking practice in Ancient Egypt as described, and illustrated with pictures, in G. Roeder, *Der Ausklang der Aegyptischen Religion... Zauberei...* (not mentioned in the bibliography) might have been acceptable; see now Heerma van Voss in PHOENIX 30, Leiden 1984, pp. 25-34. But all this is pettifogging quibbling about a major and impressive scholarly achievement.

As regards the syncretistic magic of hellenistic late antiquity, we have all been brought up on the same "Bible": Preisendanz's collection and edition of the "Greek Magical Papyri" (amulets, spells, conjurations and other texts in Greek, Demotic and Coptic). To this collection more texts have subsequently been added (e.g., Griffith and Thompson, *Pap. Dem. Mag.*)—in fact a whole corpus best described as "New Papyri Not In Preisendanz". Prof. Betz and his collaborators deserve the world of scholarship's Distinguished Service Order for their edition of a translated version of Preisendanz.<sup>34</sup> In the narrow confines of this survey the volume cannot be properly reviewed but only praised. Introduction, translation, apparatus, notes, glossary are all of equal excellence, and so will undoubtedly be vol. ii. Whereas Preisendanz (1928-33; 2nd ed. 1973-4) contained 81 items, Betz's up-to-date volume has grown to 131 items. The book is a must on every bookshelf. Magic was an international art (or craft?) in the hellenistic world. Hebrew scholars who believe that Jewish magic of the period (and up to the talmudic period) stands apart, would do well to re-read M. Margalioth's edition of *Sepher ha-Razim* (1966) in conjunction with Preisendanz now Betz, as well as with Naveh-Shaked.

### *Silk Road*

Everybody has good reasons to be interested in what is happening in Silk Road research: geographers, historians (especially economic and art

historians), and above all students of religion, no matter whether they study the spread of Nestorian Christianity, of Manichaeism, or of Buddhism in its manifold forms. The last years have generated a kind of "Silk Road Festival" atmosphere. The great Silk Road Exhibition in Nara has shown Japan at its best and its worst. Nara will never recover from the destruction wrought by Japanese efficiency, including the cutting down of the marvellous old trees to obtain more parking space. The only permanent benefit of the barbarisms perpetrated will probably be the beautiful catalogues produced in connection with the Exhibition. UNESCO has launched a major international Silk Road project with many good ideas and programmes. Fortunately nobody takes UNESCO's "in-house" jargon about "roads of dialogue" or the "renewal of an interrupted dialogue" and similar nonsense seriously. In the nature of things most of the research activity has concentrated on the Central Asian area once called Chinese Turkestan, the area between Turfan and Dun-Huang where early in this century the Aurel Steins, Pelliot, Grunwedels and LeCoqs had their free-for-all. It is also in the nature of things that as a result of historical circumstances German scholarship focusses on Turfan, French scholarship on Dun-Huang. The major change occurring in our days is the massive entry of Chinese (mainly archeology and history of art) scholarship into the field. (For a brief survey, see Werblowsky in *DIOGENE* no. 144, 1988, pp. 52-66).

Among the leading West German experts is the historian of religion of Bonn University, H.-J. Klimkeit, known to many from his numerous publications on Central Asian Manichaeism (although the actual range of his work is much wider). His *Die Seidenstrasse*<sup>35</sup> is a masterly, popular yet scholarly, survey of the geography, populations, political history, art and religion of the area. There are good descriptions of all the more important sites and a brief but adequate history of research. In spite of the bewildering variety of ethnic groups, cultural influences and languages (hellenistic, parthian, sogdian, tokharian, tibetan, mongol, uighur and turkish, and many more) characterising the area, the author argues, in his concluding chapter, for a view of the Silk Road as a distinctive "culture area". Clearly this can only refer to the Central Asian part of the Silk Road—neither to Rome or the mediterranean east coast, nor to China proper. Silk Road here means Central Asia east of Iran. Many pictures in the text as well as 27 colour-plates enhance the value of the book which is the most comprehensive survey to date of its subject in German.

The Museum of Indian Art in Berlin (West) possesses a remarkable collection of paintings and plastic art, brought to Germany mainly from the Turfan area early in this century, during the "heroic period" (we might

also call it the “great scramble”) of Silk Road research. At present most of the texts and ms. fragments are in East Berlin, most of the plastic art in the West. A large part of the unique treasures in Berlin was destroyed by bombs during World War II, but enough has survived to enable the Museum to publish an extremely well-written and beautifully illustrated catalogue of Buddhist art from the cave temples in Bezeklik, Khotcho, Kyzil and other sites.<sup>36</sup> An excellent introduction, giving the history of (mainly German Turfan) research and an analysis of architectural and art styles, is followed by plates (black and white as well as colour) most of which are accompanied by full explanations and detailed descriptions. It is a volume of which both the Museum (i.e. the publisher) and the owners can be proud.

Of the torrential monsoon downpours of recent Silk Road literature, only a few drops have fallen on NUMEN. But at least two more publications should be mentioned in this section which began with some snide remarks about Japan and the Nara exhibition. It must be added, however, that Japanese scholarship is today in the forefront, especially in the History of Art field. Unfortunately Japanese publish in Japanese (and Chinese scholars in Chinese), and hence their work remains largely unknown in the West. A German survey of Japanese Silk Road research was published in 1960 by J. Glaubitz (*Japanische Arbeiten über Zentralasien*), but it was only after 1960 that Japanese research got into gear. Prof. Klimkeit has done western scholarship a service by editing, as vol. 16 of the O. Harassowitz “Studies in Oriental Religions” series, a collection of translations of Japanese studies on “The Art of the Silk Road”<sup>37</sup>—again meaning Central Asia. Other relevant literature is mentioned by Klimkeit in his Introduction to the volume. The translated major articles (3 by UENO Aki, one by UENO Teruo, and one by HADANI Ryotai) date from the early '60s and '70s, which means that before long another such volume is needed to acquaint the West with current Japanese research. The few colour plates are of inferior quality; the 150 black-and-white pictures in the text illustrate the articles.

As is well known, the Japanese too participated in the great research scramble early in the century. The objects brought back by the “Otani Expedition” (today mainly in museums in Seoul, Tokyo and Kyoto) have been exhibited, described in catalogues, and discussed in articles. Our conditioned reflexes make us think more of the “sinisation” of Buddhism and we forget that there ever were such phenomena as Turkish Buddhism, and that the Islamic history of Uighur and Turkish tribes was preceded by other stages of their religious history. The Otani Expedition brought back, among other things, Uighur Buddhist sutras and other texts

(translated no doubt from Chinese). This gave a tremendous boost to the study of Turkish philology in Japan, three samples of which are given in German translation in the small volume "Turkish Buddhism in Japanese research".<sup>38</sup> Pp. 100-119 are facsimiles of parts of the texts discussed. The publication is due to Prof. Klimkeit's initiative. The introductory chapter by K. Röhrborn (one of the editors) gives a good survey of Japanese "Turkology" (especially Turko-Buddhology), and as part of this survey, by way of background as it were, also a good account of the Otani Expedition.

The aforementioned publications, though supposedly dealing with the "Silk Road", in reality deal with its central Asian section only. Although some critical remarks have been made here concerning the somewhat foolish UNESCO jargon, a final word of praise is in order. The international project conceived and sponsored by UNESCO is called the "Integral Study of the Silk Road". For "Silk Road" means more than Central Asia only. Without minimising the importance of research concentrating on the area between Turfan (or Gilgit and Kashgar for that matter) and Dun-Huang, UNESCO is to be congratulated on its insistence on an "integral study" of the Silk Road.

### *New Journals*

Many students of religion feel that there are already too many journals around. But in a world of population and other explosions also the number of journals explodes. Nevertheless it is a pleasure to greet the appearance of a new journal focussing on *Method & Theory*<sup>39</sup> and published by our Canadian colleagues. The first issue (Spring 1989) augurs well for the future of the new venture and makes absorbing reading especially for *historians* of religion.

R.J.Z.W.

<sup>1</sup> Margarete DIERKS, *Jakob Wilhelm Hauer 1881-1962: Leben-Wirkung-Werk* (Heidelberg, Lambert Schneider) 1986, pp. 602.

<sup>2</sup> Vivian WORTHINGTON, *A History of Yoga* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1982, pp. xxii + 153, £ 4.95, ISBN 0-7100-9258-X.

<sup>3</sup> Johannes BRONKHORST, *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India* (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, vol. 26 in the series *Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien* edited by the India-Seminar of the Univ. of Hamburg), 1986, pp. xii + 145, ISBN 3-515-04238-5.

<sup>4</sup> Richard GOTSCHALK, *Bhagavad Gita: Translation and Commentary* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas) 1985, pp. xvi + 245, ISBN 81-208-0006-0.

- <sup>5</sup> Gudrun BUHNEMANN, *Stotramala: An die Götter* (Inst. f. Indologie, Wichtrach, Switzerland) 1986, pp. 64, Sw.Frcs. 19.—, ISBN 3-7187-0006-9.
- <sup>6</sup> Diana ECK, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine in India*, 2nd rev. and enlarged ed., (ANIMA Books, Chambersburg, PA.), 1986, pp. 97.
- <sup>7</sup> J. P. WAGHORN & N. CUTLER, in assoc. w. V. NARAYANAN, *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India* (ANIMA Books, Chambersburg, PA), 1985, pp. 208, \$12.95 (paperback), ISBN 0-89012-037-4.
- <sup>8</sup> David KINSLEY, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (Berkeley, Univ. of Calif. Press), 1986, pp. 281, \$40.25, ISBN 0-520-05393-1.
- <sup>9</sup> C. J. FULLER, *Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple* (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984, pp. xxvi + 232, £22.50, ISBN 0-521-24777-2).
- <sup>10</sup> Thomas B. COBURN, *Devi-Mahatmya: The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas) 1984, pp. xvi + 362, Rs. 125, ISBN 0-8364-0869-1.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul B. COURTRIGHT, *Ganeśa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings* (New York, Oxford Univ. Press) 1985, pp. xiv + 274, £25.—, ISBN 0-19-503572-0.
- <sup>12</sup> Noel SHETH S.J., *The Divinity of Krishna* (Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal) 1984, pp. xv + 179, Rs. 80.
- <sup>13</sup> Steven J. GELBERG (ed.), *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna* (with contributions by Harvey Cox, Larry Shinn, Th. Hopkins, A. L. Basham and Shrivatsa Goswami), New York, Grove Press, 1983, paperback, pp. 276.
- <sup>14</sup> David G. BROMLEY & Larry D. SHINN (eds.), *Krishna Consciousness in the West* (Bucknell Univ. Press, Cranbury, N.J.), 1989, pp. 295, \$39.50, ISBN 0-8387-5144-X.
- <sup>15</sup> Larry D. SHINN, *The Dark Lord: Cult Images and the Hare Krishnas in America* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press), 1987, pp. 204, \$16.35 (paperback), ISBN 0-664-24170-0.
- <sup>16</sup> Donna M. WULFF, *Drama as a Mode of Religious Realization: The Vidagdhamādhava of Rūpa Gosvāmi* (Scholars Press, Chico, Calif.), 1984, pp. x + 270, \$14.95, ISBN 0-89130-608-0.
- <sup>17</sup> Tamal Krishna GOSWAMI, *Jagannātha-Priya-Nātakam: The Drama of Lord Jagannātha*, with elaborate commentary (Cambridge, Mass., Bhaktivedanta Inst. of Religion and Culture), 1985, pp. xviii + 210.
- <sup>18</sup> Klaus K. KLOSTERMAIER, *Mythologies and Philosophies of Salvation in the Theistic Traditions of India* (Waterloo, Ont.; Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press), 1984, pp. xvi + 552 (paperback), ISBN 0-88920-158-7.
- <sup>19</sup> E. Valentine DANIEL, *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way* (Berkeley, Univ. of Calif. Press), 1984, pp. xiv + 320, \$34.50, ISBN 0-520-04725-7.
- <sup>20</sup> Norman CUTLER, *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion* (Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Press), 1987, pp. 211, \$27.50, ISBN 0-253-35334-3.
- <sup>21</sup> Wendy DONIGER O'FLAHERTY, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley, Univ. of Calif. Press), 1st ed. 1976, paperback ed. 1980, pp. 411, £ 8.70, ISBN 0-520-04098-8.
- <sup>22</sup> Wendy DONIGER O'FLAHERTY (ed.), *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (Berkeley, Univ. of Calif. Press), 1980, pp. xxv + 342, £16.50, ISBN 0-520-03923-8.
- <sup>23</sup> Ronald W. NEUFELDT, *Karma and Rebirth: post-classical developments* (Albany, S.U.N.Y. Press), 1986, pp. xvii + 387, \$39.50 (paperback \$18.95, ISBN 0-87395-990-6).

<sup>24</sup> Wendy DONIGER O'FLAHERTY, *Tales of Sex and Violence: Folklore, Sacrifice, and Danger in the Jaiminiya Brahmana* (Chicago & London, Chicago Univ. Press), 1985, pp. xiv + 145, £19.50, ISBN 0-226-61852-8.

<sup>25</sup> Wendy DONIGER O'FLAHERTY, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities* (Chicago-London, Univ. of Chicago Press), 1984, pp. xvi + 361, \$28.75, ISBN 0-226-61854.

<sup>26</sup> H.-J. KLIMKEIT, *Der politische Hinduismus* (Wiesbaden, O. Harassowitz), 1981, pp. 325, paperback, ISBN 3-447-02214-0.

<sup>27</sup> Margaret CHATTERJEE, *Ghandi's Religious Thought* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hamps., Macmillan Press), 1985, pp. 194, paperback ed. £8.95, ISBN 0-333-39950-1.

<sup>28</sup> Harold G. COWARD (ed.), *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism* (Albany, S.U.N.Y. Press), 1987, pp. xii + 340, ISBN 0-88706-571-6 (hardcover).

<sup>29</sup> Ninian SMART, *Prophet of a New Hindu Age* (London, Allen & Unwin), 1985, pp. 171, £5.95 (paperback), ISBN 004-9220322.

<sup>30</sup> Deryck O. LODRICK, *Sacred Cows, Sacred Places: Origins and Survivals of Animal Homes in India* (Berkeley, Univ. of Calif. Press), 1981, xii + 307, ISBN 0-520-04109-7.

<sup>31</sup> S. N. EISENSTADT, R. KAHANE, D. SHULMAN (eds.), *Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy and Dissent in India* (Berlin, Mouton), vol. 23 in the "Religion and Society" Series, 1984, pp. 179, ISBN 3-11-009659-5.

<sup>32</sup> F. C. ENDRES & Annemarie SCHIMMEL, *Das Mysterium der Zahl: Zahlen-symbolik im Kulturvergleich* (Köln, Diederichs), 2nd ed. 1985, pp. 344, ISBN 3-424-00829-X.

<sup>33</sup> J. NAVEH & S. SHAKED, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem-Leiden, Magnes Press and E. J. Brill) 1985, pp. 293 + 40 plates, ISBN 965-223-531-8.

<sup>34</sup> H.-D. BETZ, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago-London, Univ. of Chicago Press), vol. i: Texts, 1986, pp. lviii + 339, \$39.95, ISBN 0-226-04444-0.

<sup>35</sup> H.-J. KLIMKEIT, *Die Seidenstrasse: Handelsweg und Kulturbrücke zwischen Morgen- und Abendland* (Köln, DuMont Buchverlag), 1988, pp. 270, paperback, ISBN 3-7701-1790-5.

<sup>36</sup> H. HÄRTEL & M. YALDIZ, *Die Seidenstrasse: Malereien und Plastiken aus buddhistischen Höhlentempeln* (Berlin, Staatliche Museen), 1987, pp. 179, ISBN 3-496-01042-8.

<sup>37</sup> H.-J. KLIMKEIT (ed.), *Japanische Studien zur Kunst der Seidenstrasse*, übersetzt von Renate Herold (Wiesbaden, O. Harassowitz), pp. 199, paperback, ISBN 3-447-02678-2.

<sup>38</sup> J. P. LAUT & K. RÖHRBORN (eds.), *Der türkische Buddhismus in der japanischen Forschung*, Veröffentl. der Societas Uralo-Altaica, vol. 23 (Wiesbaden, O. Harassowitz), 1988, pp. viii + 119, ISBN 3-447-02752-5.

<sup>39</sup> *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, vol. 1 no. 1 (Spring 1989). Editorial and Subscription address: MTSR c/o Center for Religious Studies, 130 Saint George Street, Univ. of Toronto, Toronto, ONT. M5S 1A5, CANADA.

TABOR, James D., *Things Unutterable. Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* [Studies in Judaism]—Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1986.

Diese Arbeit über Paulus' berühmte Entrückung in das Paradies (2 Kor 12, 2-4) geht auf eine 1981 an der University of Chicago abgeschlossene Dissertation zurück; sie wurde offenbar von Robert M. Grant und Jonathan Z. Smith betreut und darüber hinaus vor allem von Morton Smith beeinflusst.

Hauptanliegen der Arbeit ist es, Paulus und seinen Entrückungsbericht in die vielfältige religiöse Welt des antiken Hellenismus einzubetten: "All religions of this period, including forms of Judaism, are Hellenistic religions, and must be seen in that broader context. In this regard, even various forms of 'gnosticism' represent a radicalized structural possibility within this same general history, rather than genuinely 'new' religions" (S. 67). Insbesondere die magischen und mystischen Elemente dieses hellenistischen Weltbildes sind 'legitime' Bestandteile aller Religionen der Antike, auch des Christentums und des Judentums: "Those who want to separate Paul from this world of magic and mysticism, either chronologically or theologically, operate with what Robert Wilken called, in another context, a 'Eusebian' view of the past. It is assumed, because Paul is Paul (i.e., great Christian theologian and apostle), he is somehow 'pure' of the magical-mystical elements associated with ascent to heaven in other materials of the period. Jacob Neusner has repeatedly documented similar attempts to mark off periods or figures or sources belonging to a 'pure' past... by scholars working in the area of Judaism in late antiquity. This essentially 'fundamentalist' tendency is encountered often in the history of the 'history' of religions" (S. 4f.).

Dieser klar formulierte Anspruch wird in einer erfrischend direkten und verständlichen Sprache (manchmal allerdings auch etwas salopp; vgl. S. 126 Anm. 11: "Urbach, predictably, opts for..."; S. 124: "Add to that..., and you have it...") in drei Kapiteln entfaltet. Nach einem zusammenfassenden Überblick über Paulus' Selbstverständnis und "Evangelium" (Paul's Message and Mission, S. 9-55) folgt eine ausführliche Untersuchung des Motivs von der Himmelsreise in der Antike (The Heavenly Journey in Antiquity, S. 57-111). Angelpunkt dieses zentralen Kapitels ist die auf Martin Nilsson zurückgehende These von dem Wechsel des kosmologischen Paradigmas in der hellenistischen Periode: Während die archaische Kosmologie von einem dreischichtigen Universum mit Erde, Unterwelt und Himmel ausging, in dem der natürliche Platz des Menschen auf der Erde und der Tod unwiderruflich war, rückte die

Erde in der Kosmologie des Hellenismus auf die unterste Ebene eines ungeheuer ausgedehnten Universums mit zahlreichen Himmeln, in dem der Mensch sich auf der Erde "deplaziert" fühlte und alles daransetzte, von den Bedingungen der Erde befreit zu werden und in Unsterblichkeit im höchsten Himmel bei Gott zu wohnen. Diese Grundthese wendet der Verfasser auf die vier Typen der Himmelsreise an, die er der altorientalischen, biblischen, griechisch-römischen, jüdisch-apokalyptischen und christlichen Literatur entnehmen möchte: "Ascent as an invasion of heaven" und "Ascent to receive revelation" gehören noch der archaischen Periode an; "Ascent to heavenly immortality" und "Ascent as a foretaste of the heavenly world" sind dagegen für den Paradigmawechsel des Hellenismus charakteristisch.

Der Verfasser ist sich der methodischen Schwierigkeiten solcher Kategorisierungen bewußt und möchte sie eher als "working models rather than absolute types" verstanden wissen (S. 69). Dennoch kann der Leser sich nur schwer des Eindrucks erwehren, daß eine große Menge sehr unterschiedlichen Textmaterials etwas gewaltsam in die verschiedenen "Abteilungen" gepreßt wird, um generalisierende Aussagen zu ermöglichen und daß der Verfasser um so eifriger auf "overlapping categories" und sein Bestreben "to avoid excessive generalization" verweist (S. 73), je weniger er sich daran hält. Typisch ist etwa die Weise, in der das methodische Vorgehen zunächst problematisiert wird ("Indeed, in view of the problems of categorization, definition, and description, one may ask, whether such texts can even be related to one another on the basis of the heavenly journey motif. One must take account of such differences and proceed with caution in attempting to generalize"), die Bedenken dann anschließend aber mit der geradezu beschwörenden Begründung beiseitegewischt werden: "Nonetheless, I am convinced that ascent to heaven is a *characteristic* expression of Hellenistic piety, and as such is related to a relatively widespread set of shared perceptions. It is this which justifies such generalization" (S. 58).

Das letzte Kapitel (Paul's Ascent Text, S. 113-127) unterzieht auf dem Hintergrund der beiden vorangehenden Kapitel den Text in 2 Kor einer eingehenden Analyse. Der Verfasser kommt zu dem Ergebnis, daß der parallele Aufbau des Stückes am ehesten als eine zweistufige Himmelsreise gedeutet werden kann, in der "3. Himmel" und "Paradies" nicht denselben Zielort der Reise bezeichnen, sondern zwei verschiedene Stadien, nämlich zuert 3. Himmel und dann Paradies. Das "Paradies" als Endpunkt sei ein Siglum für den Thron Gottes im höchsten (wahrscheinlich 7.) Himmel, vor dem Paulus sich aufhielt und unaussprechliche Dinge hörte. Die zwei Stadien der Himmelsreise seien insofern auch ein



Schlüsselbegriff des Textes als Paulus mit dem Aufenthalt im 3. Himmel eine mit seinen Gegnern *gemeinsame* Erfahrung anspreche, während der Aufstieg zum göttlichen Thron im 7. Himmel allein ihm als dem bevollmächtigten Apostel vorbehalten geblieben sei. Der spezifisch christliche Akzent dieser Himmelsreise liege darin, daß der Aufenthalt vor dem göttlichen Thron nur das Zusammensein mit dem erhöhten Christus als Vorwegnahme der bevorstehenden Wiederkehr bedeutet haben könne.

Der Nachteil dieser ingeniosen Interpretation besteht darin, daß alle ihre wesentlichen Elemente auf Spekulationen beruhen. Das einzige Argument für die zweistufige Himmelsreise ist die sonst angeblich unnötig redundante Sprache; für die Vermutung, daß die Gegner des Paulus (nur) bis zum 3. Himmel gekommen seien, gibt es nicht den geringsten Beweis. Die Assoziation des Paradieses mit dem göttlichen Thron steht auf äußerst wackeligen Füßen, wie überhaupt nirgendwo bei Paulus davon die Rede ist, daß er irgendetwas *gesehen* hat (S. 122 unten auch richtig bemerkt; vgl. damit aber S. 120: "but he, moreover, has been taken *into Paradise*—he has appeared before God's very throne in the highest heaven. There he too (sic!) heard words..."). Besonders problematisch ist schließlich die Verwendung der rabbinischen *pardes*-Erzählung für die Deutung des Paulus-Textes (S. 117f.). Weder ist dem Verfasser die neuere Literatur dazu bekannt (etwa der Beitrag des Rezensenten "New Testament and Hekhalot Literature: The Journey into Heaven in Paul and in Merkavah Mysticism", JJS 35, 1984, S. 19-35) noch scheint er die Parallelen in der Hekhalot-Literatur zu kennen. Ohne jede genauere Analyse werden beide in einen Topf geworfen: "They (sc. die frühen Palästinischen Rabbinen!) seem to share (!) a common world with Paul, who uses this technical language (!) and expects to be understood. It seems likely (!) that Scholem was correct; they were drawing upon the same mystical tradition that later shows up here and there in the Tannaitic texts. Despite the historical distance, one has the sense (!) that in both texts... we are dealing with something quite similar. Both seem to use (!) the phrase 'entering Paradise' as a technical term. The strong implication in the BT version is..." usw. (S. 118). In diesem Punkt ist die Begrenzung der Fragerichtung auf "certain structural similarities and differences discernible in texts which contain the idea of the heavenly journey" (S. 5) allzu simpel und naiv ausgefallen.

Trotz des berechtigten und positiv zu würdigenden Grundanliegens der Arbeit ist die Durchführung insgesamt nicht sehr befriedigend; insbesondere sind die Fortschritte in der konkreten Interpretation des Paulustextes eher begrenzt. Wie vor allem an der völlig überholten Behandlung der Hekhalot-Literatur deutlich wird (S. 88f.), wäre zwischen dem Abschluß

der Dissertation (1981) und der Publikation (1986) eine gründlichere Überarbeitung angebracht gewesen.

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PETER SCHÄFER

ABE, Masao, *Zen and Western Thought* (ed. W. R. LaFleur)—London, Macmillan, 1985, pp. xxiv + 308, £ 33.00, ISBN 0-333-36206-3.

Someone asked Zen master Chao-Chou (778-897): "During the day there is sunshine. During the night there is moonshine. What is "God-shine"? Chao-Chou said: "Sunshine and moonshine".

Prof. Masao Abe seems to be after such "Godshine". Following St. Paul who said that there was no distinction between Jew and Greek, Prof. Abe declares (p. 271) "we must now say that there is no distinction between Westerner and Easterner". Consequently he finds his own Zen, beyond sunshine and moonshine, in Hegelian metaphysics and Christian theology.

The author's rendering of some Zen texts is, to say the least, unusual. E.g., he represents a dialogue (*mondō*) by Chao-Chou in the following translation: "Jōshū (Chao-Chou) was approached by an old lady who said: "Women are considered to be heavily laden with the five obstructions. How can I be freed from them?" The master said: Let all other people be born in Heaven, but may I, this old woman, be forever drowned in the ocean of suffering" (p. 78). This quotation occurs not in a discussion of Zen texts but in a chapter on Suzuki. Hence Abe, though he is aware of the fact that the translation is not quite literal, but nevertheless seems to accept it, also justifies it on the grounds that "Chao-Chou's spirit is also Christ's" (p. 79) and that "Chao-Chou is willing to suffer much more than, or in place of, anyone else". But the character *I* ("may I this old woman") does not appear in any of the Chinese sources. There is only a character that signifies "wish" or "pray" (in Japanese *negawaku wa*). The dialogue should, therefore, be translated more or less thus: "An old woman asked: 'I am an ignorant and sinful creature. How can I be delivered [from the world of suffering]?' Chao-Chou said: 'May all human beings be reborn in Heaven; may this old woman descend into hell forever'." The text has, of course, none of the Christian overtones which Prof. Abe reads into it. It is consistent with numerous other texts suggesting that fear (or the fashionable *Angst*) can be relieved only by undergoing the experience one is fearful of. Let me illustrate this point by another dialogue from the writings of Chao-Chou. "A monk was taking

his leave. Chao-Chou said: 'Where are you going?' The monk said: 'To the state of Min'. Chao-Chou said: 'In Min there is a hell of a war going on. You will have to avoid it'. The monk said: 'How can I avoid it?' Chao-Chou said: 'That's it'."

In "That's it" Chao-Chou expresses a "therapeutic principle" which has no affinity whatsoever with Christian theology or Christian ethics. This principle can be found in most Chinese Zen sources as well as in later Japanese texts. If, says this principle, you respond to a situation in an absolutely immediate way, you become the situation and the situation becomes you. By joining the fight you stop the (consciousness of) quarrel. Likewise, the only salvation for the old woman is in her actual descent into Hell. Once there, Chao-Chou implies, she won't be troubled anymore about going there.

There are many valuable insights in Prof. Abe's book, but the basic difficulty seems to lie in his attachment to modes of thought inherent in German Idealism and Christianity. Such an approach to the study of Zen, typical of a group of thinkers called the "Kyoto School", is hard to justify on philosophical grounds. It should rather be dealt with in terms of its sociological background.

Prof. Abe eagerly aspires to bring about an epoch-making dialogue between the two great "world religions"—Buddhism and Christianity. Some of his chapters read like fervent religious sermons, and there is even, on p. 249, a long poem titled "Sovereignty rests with Mankind". It seems that Christian philosopher-theologians do indeed meet with him and together they discuss, between coffee break and lunch, matters such as these (p. 200): Prof. Doi (Protestant Christian): "God is *with* me, but I myself am not God. You cannot say that you yourself are a Buddha, but a Buddha-to-be". Abe: "I did not say that I am a Buddha, but that I am Nothingness; Nothingness is me. That is the Self-Awakening which may be called the realization of Buddhahood". Prof. Doi: 'The term Nothingness could be replaced by freedom: you are free from yourself'. Prof. Abe: 'Not "free from". If you are free *from* something, there is still duality'. Prof. Doi: 'In Christianity we could talk about this freedom as a total openness'. Prof. Abe: 'That might be a better word. Man is completely open. So he is empty. Not something, but Nothing. That Nothing is not outside me. I am Nothing and Nothing is me'."

Perhaps some readers can make something of this.

# Jewish Theocracy

Gershon Weiler

1988. (xiv, 332 p.)  
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Gld. 70.—/US\$ 35.—

Jewish statehood, a notion both real and paradoxical, is the subject matter of this interdisciplinary study of its philosophical, theological, jurisprudential, historical and political aspects. The book aims to expound what follows from normative Judaism regarding the very existence of a Jewish state, especially if it is to be democratic-liberal.

The book contains chapters analyzing the political philosophies of Philo, Josephus (who coined 'theocracy'), Abravanel, Maimonides and Spinoza. It outlines the historical and institutional character of the *halakha*, with its claim to be the unfolding will of God. Lastly, it relates this material to the political fundamentals of Israeli statehood.

The author argues that *halakhic* Judaism is at most compatible with clerical dictatorship but never with the legitimacy of a state where norms are institutionally dependent upon the autonomous moral insights of a Jewish citizenry. This is an essay to advance—along much of the way in the footsteps of Spinoza—to principles of secular legitimacy.

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